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Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report focuses on the implementation of the priority themes of the resolutions entitled "Rights of the child" adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth to seventy-second sessions. It includes a review of the advancements and remaining challenges relating to international and national efforts on protecting children from discrimination and overcoming inequalities, the right to education, migrant and displaced children and ending violence against children.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 72/245, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its seventy-third session a report on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the issues addressed in the resolution, with a focus on the implementation of the priority themes of resolutions 69/157, 70/137, 71/177 and 72/245, entitled "Rights of the child", with regard to international and national efforts on protecting children from discrimination and overcoming inequalities, the right to education, migrant and displaced children and ending violence against children. This includes progress that has been achieved and challenges that still remain, taking into account information provided by Member States. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request.

II. Status of and reporting on the Convention

2. As at 1 July 2018, all Member States, with the exception of the United States of America, had ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As at 1 July 2018, 167 States had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; 174 States had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and 39 States had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

3. During the reporting period, the Committee on the Rights of the Child held its seventy-sixth to seventy-eighth sessions. As at 1 July 2018, the Committee had received initial reports from all but three States parties and had reviewed all but one of the initial reports submitted. In total, the Committee had received 537 reports submitted pursuant to article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; 115 reports and 2 periodic reports under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and 111 reports and 2 periodic reports under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

III. International efforts and national progress with regard to protecting children from discrimination and overcoming inequalities

4. During the reporting period, the international community achieved significant progress at the international and national levels with regard to protecting children from discrimination, exclusion and inequality. The inclusion of Sustainable Development Goals relating to protecting children from discrimination and overcoming inequalities in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a fundamental advancement. [1] Yet children still suffer disproportionately from violations of their rights. Member States, regional bodies, international organizations, donors, private sector actors, service delivery agencies, community-based organizations and others must commit focused attention to meeting the world's goals for children.

[1] Marie Wernham, *Mapping the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2016).

A. Right to life, survival and development

5. Poverty in childhood, itself a basis for discrimination against children and a risk factor for abuse and exploitation, often leads to deprivations that can last a lifetime. Addressing income and multidimensional poverty is essential for tackling discrimination and inequalities for children.

6. Despite the progress made in recent years, child mortality remains unacceptably high; 5.6 million children died in 2016, mostly from preventable causes.[2] Inequities, inadequate investments and lack of institutional capacity impede any further reduction in child mortality, especially for vulnerable populations affected by war, economic upheaval, public health emergencies and climate change. Among adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19, the two leading causes of death are suicide and complications during pregnancy and childbirth.[3] Non-communicable diseases, mental health disorders and the effects of substance abuse, physical inactivity and environmental pollution are growing epidemiological concerns affecting child health and well-being.

7. Several Member States have concrete plans to accelerate reductions in newborn mortality, reaching underimmunized children and scaling up timely diagnosis, care and treatment for childhood illnesses. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), developed technical guidance to assist State and non-State actors in addressing mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age in accordance with human rights standards (see A/HRC/27/31).

8. Progress in turning the tide on the HIV epidemic is evident in the 35 per cent reduction in the global number of new infections among children under 15 between 2010 and 2017.[4] Yet progress has been uneven, and children and adolescents still have unequal access to HIV testing and treatment compared with adults. Rapid population growth has created a "youth bulge" in many low- and middle-income countries that threatens to roll back recent gains, with girls being most at risk. New infections among hundreds of thousands more adolescents are expected if no immediate action is taken.[5]

9. In the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast Track to Accelerating the Fight against HIV and to Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030 (resolution 70/266), the General Assembly committed to ending the HIV epidemic by 2030. Reaching that goal requires improving access to HIV testing and treatment among children and adolescents. Knowing one's HIV status, including through family-centred care, is critical for the prevention and treatment of HIV among children and adolescents. For example, by the end of 2017, teen centres in Namibia had reached more than 1,000 adolescents living with HIV, to provide treatment adherence support and psychosocial services.[6]

10. While chronic malnutrition in children has decreased over the past decade, severe key challenges remain. Stunting affects 155 million children under 5 and 52 million children worldwide suffer from acute malnutrition or wasting; meanwhile, a sharp rise in obesity and overweight affects 41 million children under the age of 5

[2] Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, "Levels and trends in child mortality: report 2017".

[3] World Health Organization (WHO) and others, *The Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030): Survive Thrive Transform* (WHO, 2015).

[4] Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, "2017 global HIV statistics", fact sheet, July 2018.

[5] UNICEF, "Adolescent HIV prevention", HIV/AIDS database. Available at https://data.unicef.org/topic/hivaids/adolescents-young-people.

[6] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2017: HIV and AIDS* (New York, 2018).

globally.[7] In a report published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2018, States were called upon to protect children from the negative impacts of marketing unhealthy food and non-alcoholic beverages to children.[8]

11. The International Baby Food Action Network, WHO and UNICEF, together with the Network for Global Monitoring and Support for Implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and Subsequent Relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions,[9] are working to support the Committee in advising States regarding the Code and subsequent relevant resolutions. By 2016, 135 countries had some legal measures in place relating to the Code.

12. Since 2014, more than 150 million people gained access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services, more than half of them in emergency contexts such as Iraq, Nigeria and the Syrian Arab Republic.[10] Still, 2.3 billion people lack basic sanitation services and 892 million people practise open defecation.[11] In humanitarian settings, children's access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services is often interrupted and eroded.

13. National ministries of health are collaborating with WHO and UNICEF to improve water, sanitation and hygiene services in 49 countries. This includes an increasing focus on aligning emergency and development interventions with regard to water, sanitation and hygiene, such as the installation of solar powered water systems. The WASH4Work initiative, launched in 2016, is a public-private partnership for improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in the workplace and in communities where businesses operate.[12]

14. Member States are increasingly recognizing the importance of early childhood development, including its centrality to violence prevention efforts. The Early Childhood Development Action Network, launched in 2016 by the World Bank Group and UNICEF, assists in the scale-up of early childhood development services and catalyses action. In addition, neuroscientific research shows that early childhood stress, including exposure to violence, has long-term negative mental and physiological consequences for children.[13] The inclusion in the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goal target 4.2, to ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, has led to increased attention being paid to early childhood development. For example, Australia has prioritized health and education targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have disproportionately experienced poor outcomes in these areas.[14] Finland has worked to decrease client fees for early childhood education and care.

15. In 2015, the States parties to the Paris Agreement reaffirmed that children were among the groups most vulnerable to environmental harm. Since the adoption of the Agreement, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has scaled up advocacy for rights-based, sustainable and inclusive climate action that benefits and

[7] UNICEF, WHO and World Bank, "Levels and trends in child malnutrition: joint child malnutrition estimates — key findings of the 2017 edition".

[8] Amandine Garde and others, *A Child Rights-based Approach to Food Marketing: A Guide for Policymakers* (UNICEF, 2018).

[9] See www.who.int/nutrition/netcode/members/en.

[10] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2017: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene* (New York, 2018).

[11] WHO and UNICEF, *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: 2017 Update and SDG Baselines* (2017).

[12] See www.wash4work.org.

[13] Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, "Violence prevention must start in early childhood".

[14] Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report 2018* (2018).

is accountable to all, in particular children. In the report of the Committee on its day of general discussion on the topic of children's rights and the environment[15] and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment submitted in 2018 to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/37/58), important linkages between child rights obligations and the environment were highlighted. UNEP, OHCHR and partners subsequently produced a child-friendly version of the report of the Special Rapporteur.[16]

16. Stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities are drivers of the social and economic exclusion of children and their families. Children and adolescents with disabilities, including displaced children with disabilities, are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence and neglect than their peers.[17] Girls with disabilities are at increased risk of gender-based violence.[18] The lack of robust, reliable and comparable national data on children with disabilities poses a challenge to the delivery of inclusive programmes and services.

17. Examples of progress with regard to children with disabilities are evident, such as increased developmental screenings of young children in Ghana, a national insurance programme for children with disabilities in the Philippines and the prohibition of discrimination based on disability in Zimbabwe. The 2017 report "Disability inclusion guidelines", by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the Including Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action series of guidance booklets, published by UNICEF in 2017,[19] are also positive developments that contribute to changing public attitudes towards disability.

B. Right to participation

18. Children's right to participation is firmly rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in which children are recognized as active rights holders and participants in their own development, rather than as passive recipients of adult protective care (see arts. 5 and 12–17). The Optional Protocol on a communications procedure gives children the right to submit a complaint to the Committee about violations of their rights once all national effective remedies have been exhausted. In the 2030 Agenda, in particular in paragraph 51 of the Declaration and in other references pertaining to various Sustainable Development Goals, children are acknowledged as agents and the importance of child and adolescent participation in sustainable development is emphasized, including in the follow-up and review of the Goals. More than 60 per

[15] Committee on the Rights of the Child, "Report of the 2016 day of general discussion on children's rights and the environment".

[16] Students at Rathmore Grammar School, "Children's rights and the environment", child-friendly report adapted from the report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment (A/HRC/37/58), Laura Lundy, Michelle Templeton and Jen Banks, eds. (Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast).

[17] Lisa Jones and others Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies, *The Lancet*, vol. 380, no. 9845; and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, "Inclusive education and forced displacement: avoiding lost generations — providing equal access to quality education and safe learning environments", Science to Policy Brief, 2016.

[18] General comment No. 3 (2016) of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on women and girls with disabilities.

[19] Available at http://training.unicef.org/disability/emergencies/index.html.

cent of the 65 countries that have presented a voluntary national review have consulted children, adolescents and young people in that context.[20]

19. States are increasingly establishing formal channels for children and adolescents to learn about and contribute to plans and decisions relating to sustainable development. For example, in Denmark, primary and secondary schools are integrating learning about global development and sustainability into the curriculum and encouraging young people to develop solutions,[21] and Botswana has implemented multiple campaigns to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure the participation of thousands of young people.[22]

20. The Committee's general comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence is a critical milestone for child participation, complementing its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard. In its general comment No. 20, the Committee called upon States parties to the Convention to ensure that adolescents are involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of all relevant legislation, policies, services and programmes affecting their lives. The Committee also developed working methods for children's participation in the reporting processes of States parties.[23] Its next day of general discussion, to be held in September 2018, will be dedicated to the topic of protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders with a focus on child participation.[24] World Vision International has produced a series of reports on and by children, addressing child participation in efforts to end violence against children.[25]

21. Some States, such as Argentina, Ireland, Lebanon, Mexico and Panama, have adopted national legislation addressing child participation. Other States have created strategic platforms to promote child participation. These include child parliaments, student councils, venues for children to participate in accountability at the administrative level and networks for adolescents to provide input into policy design. A few States and non-governmental organizations are working to strengthen the skills of adolescents and adult facilitators to enable them to support the meaningful participation of children in various processes.

22. New technologies show promise in helping to increase the participation of children by allowing for large-scale surveys to reach more children in order to better understand their ambitions and concerns. For instance, data from the U-report, a social messaging-based platform created by UNICEF, reaches nearly 5 million subscribers, mostly young people, in 40 countries, and is used to inform policies, programmes and reports.[26] In 2017, Western Sydney University and UNICEF initiated a global evidence review on communication for development and adolescent participation, focusing on digital engagement.

23. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Women's Refugee Commission established the Global Youth Advisory Council to amplify the voices of young people who are refugees, internally displaced and/or stateless in decisions affecting them.[27] Under the Global Partnership on

[20] United Nations, Voluntary National Reviews database, available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs.

[21] Denmark, Ministry of Finance, *Report for the Voluntary National Review: Denmark's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Copenhagen, 2017).

[22] Botswana, *Botswana: Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals 2017*.

[23] See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/WorkingMethods.aspx.

[24] See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Discussion2018.aspx.

[25] See www.wvi.org/child-participation.

[26] See https://ureport.in.

[27] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Women's Refugee Commission, "We believe in youth: Global Refugee Youth Consultations — final report", November 2016.

Children with Disabilities, the Advisory Council provides leadership opportunities for young people with disabilities, including opportunities to represent children, adolescents and young people with disabilities at various global events. However, persistent negative attitudes towards the participation of children with disabilities in decision-making, as well as lack of access to sign language and hearing aids and scarce training resources for facilitating their participation, continue to impede their active engagement.

24. Children and adolescents around the globe, in particular those in disadvantaged situations, continue to face myriad barriers to their meaningful participation in mechanisms and processes that affect their lives. These barriers include cultural and discriminatory attitudes, negative social norms and political, legislative and economic obstacles (see A/69/260). The development of an internationally agreed framework for measuring meaningful child participation would increase the capacity of States and others to develop, monitor and measure participation outcomes.

IV. International efforts and national progress with regard to the right to education

25. In 2015, world leaders reaffirmed education as a human right vital to securing the well-being and productivity of individuals, families and societies with the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 4. In the same year, the world education community committed to achieving that Goal, through the adoption of the Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 — Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

26. Under the leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Member States, together with the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UNICEF and UNHCR, adopted the Education 2030 Framework for Action, a road map for achieving the 10 targets under Sustainable Development Goal 4. UNESCO publishes its *Global Education Monitoring Report* each year to track global achievements and challenges in meeting Sustainable Development Goal 4; the UNESCO Institute for Statistics is the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education. In 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education.

27. The existence of several multisectoral platforms, global reports and commitments on education demonstrates increased momentum and political will for every child to be in school and learning. As at 20 July 2018, 80 countries had endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, which was opened for endorsement in 2015, for the protection and continuation of education in armed conflict. The Education Cannot Wait initiative, which emphasizes keeping every crisis-affected child and young person in school and learning in a safe environment, has reached over half a million children in 14 countries and trained nearly 5,000 teachers since mid-2016.[28] Current and former Heads of State and leaders in the fields of education, business, economics, development, health and security established the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity.[29] In 2016, the Commission published *The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World*, in which it proposed the creation of a new international finance facility for education, which

[28] See www.educationcannotwait.org.

[29] See http://educationcommission.org/about.

would work through a consortium of multilateral development banks to use innovative financing to address growing needs in lower-middle-income countries. Dozens of international organizations, including the Group of 20 leaders, and over 100,000 individuals have expressed support for the proposal.

28. In its *World Development Report 2018*, the World Bank stresses the need to assess learning, to act on evidence and to align actors so that education systems work for learning.[30] In 2018, donor countries pledged $2.3 billion in financing through the Global Partnership for Education, and more than 50 developing countries announced plans to increase public expenditure for education.[31]

29. By 2015, almost all countries had passed national laws requiring school attendance at the primary level, with over 100 countries guaranteeing at least nine years of free and compulsory education.[32] However, similar progress is not being made in relation to pre-primary education, as only 17 per cent of countries legally stipulate at least one year of free and compulsory early childhood education.

30. In 2015, 69 per cent of children one year younger than the primary education entrance age participated in organized learning. Early grade reading improvements are evident in Liberia, Papua New Guinea and Tonga.[33] Roughly half of all countries administer a national learning assessment in reading and mathematics at the end of primary education and the end of lower secondary education.[34] Malaysia and the United Republic of Tanzania recently launched society-wide collaborative approaches to systematically improve learning.[35]

31. Some States have adopted comprehensive sectoral strategies for advancing human rights education, including human rights training for education personnel, extracurricular activities, research and other efforts (see A/HRC/36/24). OHCHR coordinates the World Programme for Human Rights Education, supports the sharing of good practices on human rights education and, together with UNESCO and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, assists in the monitoring of human rights education relating to Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7.

32. At the global level, UNESCO, with the support of UNICEF, published a document providing technical guidance on sexuality education,[36] in which it advocated access to quality, comprehensive sexuality education to promote health and well-being, respect for human rights and gender equality and to empower children and young people to lead healthy, safe and productive lives. The UNFPA Safeguard Young People Programme delivers comprehensive sexuality education, as well as HIV and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, to millions of adolescent girls and boys in Southern Africa.[37] In Bangladesh, UNFPA has partnered with Plan International and the Ministry of Education to deliver sexuality education to adolescents in schools and madrasas and through a national weekly radio programme, under the Generation Breakthrough project.

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[30] World Bank, *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise* (Washington, D.C., 2018).

[31] See www.globalpartnership.org/funding/replenishment/pledges.

[32] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/18: Accountability in Education — Meeting Our Commitments* (Paris, 2017).

[33] World Bank, *World Development Report 2018*.

[34] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2016: Education* (New York, 2017).

[35] World Bank, *World Development Report 2018*.

[36] UNESCO and others, *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: an Evidence-informed Approach*, revised ed. (Paris, UNESCO, 2018).

[37] See http://esaro.unfpa.org/en/topics/safeguard-young-people-programme.

33. Despite overall progress, including the attainment of gender parity in primary enrolment and completion, challenges to realizing the right of all children to quality education and achieving the world's other education goals remain. Indeed, 263 million school-age children and adolescents are out of school worldwide,[38] and more than 617 million children and adolescents are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics.[39]

34. Statistics sometimes mask educational inequities that are driven by poverty, location, disability, gender, ethnicity and other factors.[40] In the Caucasus and Central Asia, Northern Africa, Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia regions, girls are still more likely to be out of school than boys.[41] Recent data confirm that, across sub-Saharan Africa, one in every three children and adolescents is out of school, with girls more likely to be excluded than boys.[42]

35. Providing education opportunities in countries affected by emergencies and protracted crises, where 75 million children are in need of educational support, is a significant challenge.[43] In such settings, children often experience educational disruption due to insecurity, displacement, physical damage to school buildings, lack of teachers and other factors.

36. Additional challenges include the uneven quality of education, school bullying and violence.[44] More than one in three students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying.[45] Because as many as 50 per cent of children with disabilities are out of school,[46] school-based programmes to educate girls about puberty and provide absorbent materials for menstruation often do not reach girls with disabilities.[47] Moreover, studies show that, in some countries, girls who are in school, including those with disabilities, often drop out when they begin to menstruate.[48] Inaccessibility of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools is also a barrier for children with disabilities.[49]

37. Monitoring children's learning is an ongoing challenge, as three quarters of countries have insufficient or no data to assess progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.[50] UNICEF has developed new modules for its multiple indicator cluster survey to improve data collection on children's reading and numeracy skills, as well as on education for children with disabilities. Based on current trends, by

[38] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "One in five children, adolescents and youth is out of school", fact sheet No. 48, February 2018.

[39] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "More than one half of children and adolescents are not learning worldwide", fact sheet No. 46, September 2017.

[40] UNICEF *Annual Results Report 2017: Education* (New York, 2018).

[41] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016: Gender Review — Creating Sustainable Futures for All* (Paris, 2016).

[42] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Education data release: one in every five children, adolescents and youth is out of school", 28 February 2018. Available at http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/education-data-release-one-every-five-children-adolescents-and-youth-out-school.

[43] Education Cannot Wait, "Education in emergencies". Available at www.educationcannotwait.org/the-situation.

[44] UNESCO, *School Violence and Bullying: Global Status Report* (Paris, 2017).

[45] UNICEF, *A Familiar Face: Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents* (New York, 2017).

[46] Suguru Mizunoya, Sophie Mitra and Izumi Yamazaki, *Towards Inclusive Education: The Impact of Disability on School Attendance in Developing Countries*, Innocenti Working Paper, No. 2016-03 (UNICEF, 2016).

[47] United Nations Girls' Education Initiative and Leonard Cheshire Disability, *Still Left Behind: Pathways to Inclusive Education for Girls with Disabilities* (June 2017).

[48] Sian White S and others, "A qualitative study of barriers to accessing water, sanitation and hygiene for disabled people in Malawi" *PLoS One*, vol. 11, No. 5 (2016).

[49] UNICEF, "WASH disability inclusion practices: including people with disabilities in UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programming".

[50] UNICEF, Progress for Every Child in the SDG Era, (New York, 2018).

2030, some 1.5 billion adults will still have had no education beyond primary school, and they will disproportionately come from low-income countries and marginalized communities. Without significant increases in education investments, by 2030 only 1 child in 10 from low-income countries will have mastered basic secondary skills.[51]

V. International efforts and national progress with regard to migrant and displaced children

38. Millions of children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced. Many of them have left their homes to escape violence, insecurity, persecution, natural disasters, poverty and food insecurity.[52] In 2016, children made up about half of refugees and asylum seekers, at around 12 million globally.[53] Meanwhile, an estimated 23 million children were living in internal displacement, 16 million as a result of conflict and 7 million owing to natural disasters, a dramatic increase over the past decade.[54]

39. All children are protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, regardless of where they come from or the reason for their movement.[55] This includes the right of every child to acquire a nationality, particularly where the child would otherwise be left stateless. The Committee on the Rights of the Child highlighted this with its adoption, together with the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, of two joint general comments on the human rights of children in situations of international migration in 2017.[56] Many Sustainable Development Goals are directly related to improving the lives of migrant and displaced children with regard to health, education, gender equality, decent work, sustainable cities, climate action and peaceful societies.[57] The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, with the support of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, issued recommendations to protect the rights of children on the move.[58]

40. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted in 2016 (resolution 71/1), Member States acknowledged the vulnerabilities and specific needs of migrant and refugee children and committed themselves to fully protecting their rights, including through the development of a global compact for safe, orderly and

[51] International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, *The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World*.

[52] UNICEF and others, "A call to action: protecting children on the move starts with better data", 2018.

[53] UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2016* (Geneva, 2017).

[54] UNICEF and others, "A call to action".

[55] UNICEF, "The Global Compact on Refugees: the time for action for children uprooted is now".

[56] Joint general comment No. 3 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 22 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the general principles regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration; and joint general comment No. 4 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 23 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on State obligations regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration in countries of origin, transit, destination and return.

[57] International Organization for Migration, "Migration in the 2030 Agenda".

[58] European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, "Recommendations: safeguarding and protecting the rights of children on the move – the challenge of social inclusion", paper prepared for the Regional Meeting of European Children's Ombudspersons, Athens, November 2017.

regular migration and a global compact on refugees.[59] UNHCR coordinates the implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework.[60]

41. The multi-stakeholder Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts works to ensure that, under the global compacts, the rights of migrant and refugee children will be respected and fulfilled.[61] Through the Global Forum on Migration and Development, Member States address the interconnections between migration and development, including in relation to children in the processes of developing the global compacts.[62] In 2017, a Human Rights Council panel provided concrete recommendations for ensuring that the rights of migrant children, regardless of their migration status, would be reflected in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (see A/HRC/36/21). In its 2017 report *Beyond Borders: How to Make the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees Work for Uprooted Children* and its six-point action agenda for children on the move,[63] UNICEF provides best practices and a framework for positively focusing on children in the global compacts.

42. The Global Migration Group brings together heads of United Nations agencies to promote international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration, such as the principles and guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations,[64] and to encourage more comprehensive approaches, including in relation to children. The Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants is a four-year (2015–2019) joint initiative focused on implementing comprehensive national counter-trafficking responses.[65] For example, the scheme has enabled Belarus, Brazil, Colombia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic to build comprehensive national referral pathways for child victims of trafficking.

43. Some States are making service delivery more inclusive of migrant and refugee children. In 2017, over 75 countries increased multisectoral support for children with migrant status, including for Syrian refugee children in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey and Rohingya children in Bangladesh. Also in 2017, the Italian Parliament adopted legislation to ensure various protection measures for unaccompanied children, and Bulgaria adopted a legislative amendment guaranteeing the right to education for all migrant children. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are collaborating to develop protocols for addressing the situation of unaccompanied adolescents in border areas, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF.

44. IOM has developed a specialized course on assisting unaccompanied migrant children for migration officers, staff of children's institutes and consular officials, among other actors. IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF are working with States to scale up data collection on children on the move, including in Libya, where partners are establishing a best interests procedure for migrant and refugee children. Several countries have included refugee issues in planning and monitoring frameworks, reflecting efforts by the Global Partnership for Education and UNHCR to focus on this area in multi-year education sector plans. UNHCR, UNICEF and the International

[59] See refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact and www.unhcr.org/en-us/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html.

[60] See www.unhcr.org/en-us/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html.

[61] See www.childrenonthemove.org.

[62] See https://gfmd.org.

[63] See UNICEF, *Data Brief: Children on the Move – Key Facts and Figures* (New York, 2018).

[64] Available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/PrinciplesAndGuidelines.pdf.

[65] See www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/glo-act/index.html.

Rescue Committee support States in improving protections for unaccompanied and separated children in Europe.[66]

45. Children on the move around the globe continue to face violations during all phases of the migration and displacement cycles. Their vulnerability varies based on pre-existing risk factors, the specific reasons for their move and conditions during travel and transit and at their destination.[67] The report *Harrowing Journeys: Children and Youth on the Move across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation*, published in 2017 by IOM and UNICEF, exposes the increased vulnerabilities and high incidence of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking among migrant and displaced children and young people. In particular, those travelling alone, those with low levels of education, those undertaking longer journeys and those from sub-Saharan Africa are among the most vulnerable. Children displaced as a result of conflict are also at increased risk due to the complexity of those settings. Children travelling to or from rural areas face an increased risk of being exploited or trafficked into child labour in agriculture and other sectors.

46. Other complicating factors include limited technical capacity at the national and regional levels; limited disaggregated data, including about undocumented children; insufficient knowledge about migration and refugee routes and numbers; xenophobia in host communities; complexities relating to repatriating children, such as a lack of basic services available to repatriated children; and limited funding. Providing consistent, high-quality educational opportunities for migrant and displaced children is another major hurdle.[68]

47. Many countries around the world still detain children, sometimes systematically, on the basis of their legal status or that of their parents.[69] Detention has negative impacts on child health and development, even during short periods of confinement. Access to education, health care, family life, legal representation, age assessment and guardianship is difficult for immigrant and asylum-seeking children who are detained and for those in non-custodial care arrangements. Moreover, in most instances, non-custodial care arrangements for migrant and asylum-seeking children are not available, and when they are, they may also fall below the standards outlined in the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (resolution 64/142). In general, understanding the scope and impact of the problem remains difficult because few States collect and publish data on children in detention.

48. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Member States affirmed that detention of migrant and refugee children is seldom, if ever, in the best interests of the child and committed themselves to working towards ending the practice. As subsequently expressed in the joint general comments on the human rights of children in the context of international migration and by leading United Nations experts on the rights of the child, the detention of children on the basis of migration or refugee status is never in their best interests and constitutes a violation of their rights. In 2017, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention released its revised deliberation No. 5 on deprivation of liberty of migrants (A/HRC/39/45, annex), in which it stipulated that the detention of children because of their parents' migration

[66] UNHCR, UNICEF and International Rescue Committee, *The Way Forward to Strengthened Policies and Practices for Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Europe* (July 2017).

[67] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Global Migration Group, *Principles and Guidelines, Supported by Practical Guidance, on the Human Rights Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations*.

[68] UNICEF, *Education Uprooted: For Every Migrant, Refugee and Displaced Child, Education* (New York, 2017); and UNHCR, *Left Behind: Refugee Education in Crisis* (Geneva, 2017).

[69] Committee on the Rights of the Child, "Report of the 2012 day of general discussion on the rights of all children in the context of international migration".

status is a violation of the rights of the child. In its related issue brief,[70] UNHCR stated that children should never be detained for immigration-related purposes, irrespective of their migratory status or that of their parents.

49. In its resolution 69/157, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to commission a global study on children deprived of liberty to collect disaggregated data on the situation of children deprived of liberty, including in relation to immigration. The final report will provide recommendations and good practices for implementing international standards and developing child-sensitive protection systems that avoid detention.[71] In the framework of the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts, which brings together more than 26 agencies with expertise in promoting child rights worldwide, the International Detention Coalition developed a road map to ending child immigration detention, outlining a timeline for States to end child immigration detention.[72] The Coalition and UNHCR have published several related resources to support efforts to prohibit detention of children and families based on migration status.[73]

50. Some States, such as Ecuador, Italy and Mexico, have created policy or legal prohibitions for child and family immigration detention in line with the evolving normative framework on the issue. However, implementation of national policies and legislation is often lacking, and some States are reintroducing policies that roll back progress.

VI. International efforts and national progress with regard to ending violence against children

51. Millions of children of all ages, races and cultures, and regardless of socioeconomic status or geography, experience emotional, physical and sexual violence in homes, communities, schools, workplaces, detention centres and childcare institutions and online, among other settings (see A/72/356). Violence against children takes many forms — often different for girls and boys — and increases children's risk of injury, self-harm and compromised health and cognitive development (ibid). The global cost of violence against children is estimated at $7 trillion, affecting employment markets and national productivity and requiring greater investments across sectors.[74]

52. Global commitments to addressing violence against children are at an all-time high, marked by the Sustainable Development Goal targets to combat violence, in particular target 16.2, on ending all forms of violence against children, and by efforts to track progress against those targets. Additional Sustainable Development Goal targets address related factors such as eliminating violence against women and girls, harmful practices, forced and child labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons.

[70] UNHCR, "UNHCR's position regarding the detention of refugee and migrant children in the migration context", January 2017.

[71] The Independent Expert of the global study on children deprived of liberty is leading this process. See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx.

[72] International Detention Coalition, "Road Map to Ending Child Immigration Detention"; see also Jacqueline Bhabha and Mike Dottridge, "Child rights in the global compacts: recommendations for protecting, promoting and implementing the human rights of children on the move in the proposed global compacts", working document, 24 June 2017.

[73] See, for example, International Detention Coalition, Alternatives to Detention database, available at https://database.idcoalition.org, and "Never in a child's best interests: a review of laws that prohibit child immigration detention", Briefing Paper, No. 2 (June 2017).

[74] Development Initiatives and others, "Counting pennies: a review of official development assistance to end violence against children", 2017.

Mandated by the General Assembly, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children continues to act as a global independent advocate of the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children. In 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating its general recommendation No. 19, and the Human Rights Council adopted its resolution 35/16 on child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings. The Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage developed by UNFPA and UNICEF promotes girls' right to delay marriage, reaching over 754,000 girls in 2016, and galvanizes political action, such as the creation of national action plans in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Uganda and Zambia.[75]

53. Several multi-stakeholder platforms and initiatives are aimed at preventing and ending violence against children. For example, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children supports efforts to achieve target 16.2 by strengthening collaboration, building political will and accelerating national-level action.[76] Since mid-2016, the Fund to End Violence against Children has awarded over $23 million in grants to programmes that prevent and respond to online violence through individual, societal, industrial and systems-level change in over 20 countries around the globe.[77] The INSPIRE Working Group has developed seven strategies for ending violence against children, a companion handbook on programme implementation and an indicator compendium to track progress and align reporting.[78]

54. In 2018, the Government of Sweden, the WeProtect Global Alliance and the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children jointly hosted the Agenda 2030 for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit. Participants reiterated the need for continuous investment in evidence and data, in child protection programming in the digital age and in enhanced programming to committed Governments of "pathfinding countries".[79]

55. With regard to data and research, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and UNICEF are driving efforts to develop an evidence hub, map data and monitor and evaluate efforts. The UNICEF publication *A Familiar Face: Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents* contains comparable cross-national data. The Know Violence in Childhood initiative launched its flagship report, entitled *Ending Violence in Childhood: Global Report 2017*. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lead national data collection in over 20 countries, in collaboration with Together for Girls and UNICEF.

56. Many countries are developing policies and reforming laws to address violence across the life cycle of a child. By 2017, some 53 States had enacted national legislation prohibiting all forms of violence against children, including corporal

[75] See www.unicef.org/protection/57929_92681.html.

[76] See www.end-violence.org.

[77] See www.end-violence.org/fund.

[78] WHO and others, *INSPIRE Handbook: Action for Implementing the Seven Strategies for Ending Violence against Children* (Geneva, WHO, 2018); and UNICEF and others, *INSPIRE Indicator Guidance and Results Framework: Ending Violence against Children – How to Define and Measure Change* (New York, UNICEF, 2018), both available at www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire-package/en.

[79] More information about the Agenda 2030 for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit and about pathfinding countries is available at www.end-violence.org/summit and www.end-violence.org/take-action/governments/pathfinders.

punishment within the family,[80] and over 90 countries were implementing coordinated national action plans, laws and policies to address violence against children, including legislation to protect victims, strengthen social services and promote change in societal beliefs and attitudes.[81] Some countries have made legislative and policy advances to address specific forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, bullying and violence in the home, and for some States it is a priority to increase institutional capacity to protect children and improve early detection and prevention of violence against children (see A/72/356).

57. An increasing number of multisectoral initiatives have been developed to address violence in and around schools, including a specialized focus in some countries on protecting children from bullying and peer-to-peer violence. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children and the Government of Mexico documented good practices to end bullying and cyberbullying at a regional consultation in 2018. Globally, over 80 countries have legal and policy frameworks to address violence in and around schools.[82] By the end of 2017, 130 States had prohibited corporal punishment in schools.[83] In 2017, the Human Rights Council adopted a report addressing violence against girls in the context of education (A/HRC/35/11). The Global Working Group to End School-related Gender-based Violence promotes evidence-based approaches to addressing the issue.[84] An increasing number of countries are scaling up programmes addressing child-rearing practices to prevent violence against children occurring in the home, the most common form of violence that children experience.[85]

58. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Programme on Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice supports Member States in promoting legal and policy reform and strengthening justice systems and the capacities of prosecutors. For example, it has worked in Colombia to address violence against children through the planning and implementation of a restorative justice programme, and it supports the Government of the Niger in promoting and protecting the rights of children associated with Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram). *The Handbook on the Treatment of Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System*, published by UNODC in 2017, and the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, adopted by the General Assembly in 2014 (resolution 69/194), lay the groundwork for creating sustainable and child-friendly justice systems.

59. Increased efforts to tackle sexual violence against children include legal and policy reform, capacity-building, shifting social norms, programmatic advances and improving data collection. The WeProtect Global Alliance builds links with industries, in such sectors as travel and tourism and information and communications technology, and with civil society to end sexual violence against children. Important steps for setting standards and generating evidence are outlined in *Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children and Adolescents: Theory of Change*, published by UNICEF in 2017, as well as in *Terminology Guidelines for the*

[80] Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, "Ending legalized violence against children: global progress to December 2017 — following up the United Nations Secretary General's study on violence against children", 2017.

[81] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2017: Child Protection* (New York, 2018).

[82] Ibid.

[83] Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, "Ending legalized violence against children".

[84] See www.ungei.org/news/247_srgbv.html.

[85] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2017: Child Protection*.

Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse[86] and *Offenders on the Move: Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism 2016*.[87]

60. Efforts to protect children online have progressed at an unprecedented rate. Such efforts include legal and policy reforms; stronger coordination; partnerships with the technology industry; better use of helplines, online platforms and counselling services; awareness and education campaigns; research; and the production of global standards and tools. In 2015, the WeProtect Global Alliance established the first global programme to support efforts in tackling online child sexual exploitation. Some 47 countries are now addressing online child sexual exploitation.[88] In one outcome, a partnership between UNICEF and the leading Internet service provider in China promotes child online protection. In another, the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and other partners, produced the first guidelines in the region for protecting children's rights in the digital environment.

61. Despite progress at all levels, violence against children remains pervasive. Weak coordination between and among actors creates barriers to effective intersectoral approaches and the effective scale-up of actions to address violence against children. Limited technical expertise at the national level, insufficient data, failure to bring parenting programmes to scale and limited investment in prevention and child protection are additional obstacles.[89]

62. Some children, such as children in emergency settings, migrant and displaced children, children without parental care, children with disabilities and children in detention facilities are at increased risk of experiencing violence and often have less access to the services and care that they need. Child labourers, including those engaged in domestic labour and the worst forms of child labour, are at increased risk of violence, including exploitation and abuse that hinder their healthy development and compromise their right to education.[90] Child labourers in agriculture, where a vast majority of child labour occurs, also face exposure to harmful agrochemicals and other hazards.[91] Alliance 8.7 strives to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour.[92] Many children and adolescents are subject to armed violence in non-conflict settings, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, where close to 70 adolescents die every day owing to interpersonal violence.[93]

63. In emergency settings, State armed and security forces and non-State armed groups continue to perpetrate grave violations against children, such as killing, maiming, abduction, rape and other forms of sexual violence and their recruitment and use in fighting forces. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict works to end violations against children in war by raising awareness, promoting information collection and fostering international cooperation. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for

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[86] Susanna Greijer and Jaap Doek, *Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse* (ECPAT International, 2016).

[87] Angela Hawke and Alison Raphael, *Offenders on the Move: Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism, 2016* (ECPAT International, 2016).

[88] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2017: Child Protection*.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *FAO Guidance Note: Child Labour in Agriculture in Protracted Crises, Fragile and Humanitarian Contexts* (Rome, 2017).

[91] The International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture works to eliminate and prevent child labour in agriculture. See www.fao.org/rural-employment/background/partnerships/international-partnership-for-cooperation-on-child-labour-in-agriculture/en.

[92] See www.alliance87.org.

[93] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report 2017: Child Protection*.

Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, other United Nations entities and civil society actors monitor and report on such violations through the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict. In 2017, OHCHR submitted a report to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-seventh session identifying challenges to and measures for addressing violence against children in humanitarian settings (A/HRC/37/33).

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

64. **The complex and enduring hurdles that national, regional and international actors face in their efforts to protect the rights of all children require innovative and effective approaches. Member States, United Nations entities, civil society and others must increase financial, political and programmatic commitments to achieve the child-centred targets of the 2030 Agenda and the aims of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

65. **While many important efforts are already under way, States, with the support of all relevant entities, must accelerate their actions to improve data, increase investment, strengthen cross-sectoral work, develop legislative and policy reforms, support national human rights institutions and tackle new and emerging areas of concern. The upcoming thirtieth anniversary of the Convention, in 2019, should be used as a catalyst for maintaining momentum and increasing action. Such efforts should include raising the profile of children in the most vulnerable situations, such as those with disabilities, girls, pregnant adolescents, children without parental care, children in alternative care, very young children, children living in poverty, displaced and migrant children, stateless children, indigenous children, children from minority groups, children in rural and hard-to-reach areas, children affected by HIV, child labourers, children affected by violence, conflict, economic upheaval and climate change, children deprived of liberty, including in the justice system, and children in other disadvantaged situations.**

A. Recommendations for protecting children's right to life, survival and development

66. **States should budget for, adopt, implement and monitor national legislation and policies that allow all children to enjoy their rights without discrimination of any kind. Such legislation and policies should ensure universal access to quality, affordable services in such areas as water, sanitation and hygiene, early childhood development, HIV testing and care, nutrition and health, including sexual and reproductive health and maternal and newborn health. States should focus on identifying and reaching the children in the most vulnerable and marginalized situations.**

67. **All relevant actors should work towards concerted interventions to build technical capacity at the local level, increase and improve multisectoral responses, strengthen systems, overcome discriminatory social and cultural norms and increase investment through public and private sources.**

B. Recommendations for increasing the participation of children and adolescents

68. **States should work to realize the right of all children and adolescents to be heard as "agents of change" in all decisions affecting their lives by increasing their meaningful and systematic participation, including in "best interests" determinations in judicial and administrative processes, within families, in communities and in schools. Such efforts would require investing in child- and adolescent-friendly civil society, reducing gender-based and other barriers to participation, confronting discriminatory attitudes and norms, building the capacity of children and adult facilitators and engaging children in the design of participatory platforms. It would also mean increasing support for consultative processes and including the voices of the hardest-to-reach children, regardless of race, age, gender, nationality, disability status or access to technology.**

69. **All relevant actors should promote participation by working to improve children's and adolescents' access to timely information in a language and format that is accessible to them and by creating programmes that allow children and adolescents to connect with their peers, increase their sense of agency and improve their ability to make informed decisions and choices.**

70. **Member States should implement the recommendations from the Committee's general comments Nos. 12 and 20, so as to increase the meaningful and systematic participation of children and adolescents through legislation, policies, services and programmes affecting their lives. Such measures should involve developing tools to monitor and measure the participation of children in decision-making processes that have an impact on them.**

C. Recommendations for protecting children's right to education

71. **States should create inclusive, equitable, safe and quality education systems that provide relevant learning opportunities for all learners starting in early childhood, including for children in the most disadvantaged situations. In many cases, such efforts would involve changing educational content, approaches, structures and strategies; engaging States, donors, civil society, the private sector, educators, young people and families in educational policy design; and putting learning outcomes at the centre of educational policy. Such measures would require increasing national budget allocations for all aspects of education.**

72. **States should take proactive steps to remove structural, practical and financial barriers that compromise children's right to education without discrimination of any kind. This is important for all vulnerable children, including children with disabilities, who should have access to inclusive education at all levels, and girls who are at risk of missing out on school owing to marriage or pregnancy. A key step would be to undertake, at the national and local levels, a review of education sector plans, budgets, curricula, enrolment targets and textbooks.**

73. **States and other relevant actors in countries affected by emergencies and protracted crises should work to provide quality education and learning opportunities at scale for all children, including all excluded, displaced and vulnerable children; minimize educational disruption; improve access to quality water, sanitation and hygiene and nutrition in educational settings; increase access to early learning services; and nurture innovation in educational contexts.**

74. **All relevant actors should collaborate to improve education-monitoring systems, in particular those relating to learning outcomes, and increase cross-sectoral partnerships between education, health, nutrition and social protection.**

D. Recommendations for protecting migrant and displaced children

75. **States and public and private sector donors should allocate more resources to programming for children on the move in order to meet the demands of current migration and displacement trends and to safeguard the best interests of children in all situations, including in host communities. Such resources are essential for expanding technical capacity to provide medical and psychosocial assistance, family tracing, legal aid, reunification, quality age- and gender-sensitive screening of vulnerable new arrivals, voluntary return and reintegration support, and shelter, guided by the best interests of the child. Investments should reach children on the move in the most vulnerable situations, including separated and unaccompanied children, girls, children with disabilities and those moving to and from rural areas.**

76. **All relevant actors should prioritize coordination at all levels to facilitate family reunification and continuity of care for migrant and displaced children. They should also address xenophobia in host communities; deliver immediate and high-quality education for all uprooted children; and prioritize the collection of disaggregated data about children on the move and migratory and displacement routes and numbers, including through agreed global indicators.**

77. **States should prohibit and stop the practice of detaining children due to asylum or immigration status, through legislation, policies and practices that are consistent with international norms and standards.**

E. Recommendations for preventing and ending violence against children

78. **States should adopt, budget for, implement and monitor multisectoral national plans, legislation and policies to prevent and end all forms of violence against all children in all settings, including to protect children in the most vulnerable situations. Such efforts should increase technical expertise at the national level; improve data collection, analysis and dissemination; strengthen the social service workforce; make use of technology and innovation; build strong case management and referral pathways; and increase overall investment.**

79. **All relevant actors should align efforts to increase collaboration across sectors and strengthen political commitment and action to prevent and end violence against children. They should actively engage communities, religious and local leaders, families, and children and adolescents, including individuals and groups in the most vulnerable situations, and work to overcome harmful attitudes and social norms that breed and condone violence against children.**

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New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

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Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/315, which requested the Secretary-General to report on persistent and emerging challenges to the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, as well as on the approach and support of the United Nations system.

The present report marks the twentieth anniversary of the annual report of the Secretary-General on causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Thus, it re-examines key structural factors that have increased the probability of conflict and insecurity on the continent in the past two decades, and for which further action is required to achieve the shared goals and aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Follow-up actions and initiatives of the United Nations system to implement the recommendations contained in my report of 2017 (A/72/269-S/2017/780) are also highlighted.

Consistent with my vision on preventing conflict and sustaining peace, and in keeping with the mandate of resolution 71/315 to develop policy proposals on issues identified in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General (A/52/871-S/1998/318), the present report advocates for the strengthening of capacities for structural conflict prevention in Africa. Notable progress has been made, especially with regard to the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture. However, more concerted action by African regional and subregional organizations and by Africa's international partners is needed to further strengthen African-led efforts to prevent conflicts and address their root causes, including through more integrated and inclusive people-centred approaches.

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I. Introduction

1. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/315, the present report covers persistent and emerging challenges to the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, as well as the approach and support of the United Nations system in tackling those challenges. As 2018 marks the twentieth year since the report's first publication in 1998 (see A/52/871-S/1998/318), the present report highlights progress made over the past two decades and assesses remaining challenges by focusing on the root causes of conflict.

2. In section II, the report highlights progress made and assesses persisting and emerging root causes of conflicts as well as the conditions required to build durable peace and people-centred development. Section III examines key actions and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations system during the period under review, from July 2017 to June 2018, to support Africa's efforts to prevent conflict, address its root causes and sustain peace. The support provided by the United Nations system on economic and social issues, specifically, is covered in my complementary report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/73/269). Consistent with my vision on preventing conflict and the African Union's renewed focus on structural conflict prevention, section IV advocates for the strengthening of capacities for conflict prevention in Africa at all levels. Section V outlines key recommendations for reinforcing the United Nations partnership with and support to Africa in preventing conflicts and addressing their root causes.

II. Two decades in review

3. The present section provides an overview of Africa's progress during the past two decades, assesses some remaining structural causes of conflict and highlights some remedial measures taken by African regional and subregional organizations to address the root causes of conflicts.

A. Overview of Africa's progress in the past two decades

4. In 1997, the Security Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/1997/46) requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report on the sources of conflict in Africa that contained recommendations on ways to prevent and address those conflicts and lay the foundation for durable peace and economic growth. The subsequent report (A/52/871-S/1998/318) identified the sources of conflict in Africa as diverse and complex, comprising historical legacies of colonial and post-cold war ideologies, internal power contestations linked to a "winner-takes-all" syndrome, often violent politicizations of ethnicity, social exclusion and inequality and quests for the control and economic benefits of natural resources.

5. To tackle those challenges, the 1998 report stressed the vital roles early warning, early and effective action and well-prepared and well-coordinated peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts that are driven by Africa and backed by adequate international support and flexibility play in preventing and responding to conflicts. It also emphasized that good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, anti-corruption measures, social development, inclusive economic growth and political will were needed to create conditions for peace and sustainable development on the continent.

6. In 2010, a comprehensive review report (A/65/152-S/2010/526) on the recommendations contained in the 1998 report appraised new and emerging challenges, persistent obstacles and innovative solutions, gains and accomplishments

in the attainment of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report highlighted Africa's increased capacity to provide solutions to its problems and engage as an effective partner. In that respect, the United Nations was called upon to reassess its relationship with Africa on the basis of complementarity, comparative advantage and collective responsibility, as well as to establish appropriate partnerships to support the enhanced capacity of African Governments and institutions as leading actors in peace and development on the continent.

7. The past two decades have indeed witnessed remarkable progress and the emergence of a new African narrative in all areas covered in previous reports. Africa is driving its own agenda and rising to meet its peace and development challenges. Considerable progress has been made in developing normative standards and legal and policy instruments, as well as in building capacities and institutions for tackling pressing collective security challenges and advancing shared political, economic, social and regional integration objectives. With the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture, Africa's institutional capacities for conflict prevention, management and resolution have been developed, and substantial efforts have been made to deepen a culture of democracy, reject unconstitutional changes of government and ensure peaceful political transitions through periodic elections. Significant advancements have been made with regard to regional cooperation and integration, with Africa adopting common positions on global issues of importance to the continent. Ongoing institutional reforms by the African Union aim to consolidate those gains in order to enhance the organization's effectiveness in delivering on its peace, development and integration agenda, addressing the perennial issue of financing for its programmes and peace operations and promoting the rigorous, transparent and accountable management of its resources.

8. Africa has also experienced a period of sustained economic growth and social progress in the past two decades. As noted in my report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, African countries were among the 10 fastest growing economies in the world, recording an annual growth rate of about 5 per cent. Trade between Africa and the rest of the world has increased by 200 per cent since 2000, and intra-Africa trade is also predicted to increase following the signing, in March 2018, of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. The impressive economic growth of the past decade is the result of improved economic governance, including macroeconomic reforms, and a growing climate of political stability. To sustain that, Africa will need to increase efforts at diversifying its economies and advancing industrialization that are backed by innovation, science and technology. The creation of decent jobs and the provision of equal access to opportunities, especially for its growing youth population, remains an urgent priority in Africa, as is the need to address other causes of exclusion.

9. On the social front, Africa has made encouraging progress in establishing social safety nets, promoting girls' education, gender equality, combating infant and maternal mortality and tackling diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and Ebola. Nevertheless, more is required to improve living standards for all Africans, including in areas related to health, tertiary education, child protection, empowering women, combating gender-based violence, sanitation and reducing poverty.

10. In the past two decades, Africa has also increased its cooperation with bilateral partners and demonstrated a continued commitment to multilateralism and to an effective multilateral system for promoting international peace and security and collective action to tackle other economic, social and environmental threats, such as climate change. For instance, there has been momentum to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: 28 African countries have already presented or are planning to present their voluntary national reviews by 2019. In addition, a

stronger and more progressive institutional partnership has been forged between the African Union and the United Nations, as evidenced in the signing of the Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security in April 2017, and the Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in January 2018.

11. To consolidate those achievements and address persisting and new challenges, African Governments, with the support of their international partners, will need to ensure the genuine and meaningful implementation of all the progressive policies they have in place for peace and security, human rights, good governance, anti-corruption and sustainable development. Effective implementation will require real and sufficient political will by Africa's leaders and regional and subregional organizations, backed by adequate resources, to transform existing policies into reality for the African people. It will also require political will and the sustained commitment of the international community to support Africa-owned, Africa-driven and African-led solutions. The United Nations Security Council and Peace and Security Council of the African Union also continue to hold regular joint consultative meetings, and have undertaken to conduct joint missions to conflict areas in Africa to facilitate the formulation of common positions and recommendations for joint or coordinated action.

B. Conflicts in Africa: persisting and emerging root causes

12. Despite the progress highlighted above, challenges remain. In the past two decades, just as the international community has witnessed a number of African countries that were embroiled in armed conflict in 1998 successfully emerge from those conflicts, it has also seen others relapse or break out into violent conflicts, with significant changes in the frequency and intensity of those conflicts.

13. Recent conflicts in Africa have tended to be more intra-State, rather than between States, and they often have a regional and cross-border dimension and new and multiple actors or agents who have varied goals, tactics and targets. Local militias, factionalized armed groups and extremist and terrorist groups have emerged as new actors and agents, alongside national armies and protesting civilians. Goals have expanded beyond the quest for political power and State control to include identity issues over ethnicity and religion, terrorism, increased access to resources such as land and water and a need for basic human rights, security and development. Civilians and civilian sites such as settlements, schools and medical facilities are often targeted, and unconventional tactics including suicide bombings, abductions and sexual violence are now employed. Current trends in conflict are characterized by grave civilian fatalities, forced displacement, the recruitment and use of children, setbacks to peace and political processes and a weakening of the social fabric and economic losses. Those trends reflect structural weaknesses, necessitating an increased focus on addressing the root causes of conflict while also tackling proximate causes and triggers, including through inclusive, sustainable development.

14. Previous reports, including the 1998 report, have addressed a variety of root causes of conflict in Africa, many of which remain unaddressed. They include social exclusion; poverty; injustice; corruption; the mismanagement of natural resources; maritime insecurity; the presence of small arms; organized crime; weak institutions; human rights violations, including children's and women's rights; poor diversity management; unemployment; and governance deficits relating to democracy, a lack of inclusive participation of women and youth in political and peace processes, election-related violence and "winner-takes-all" syndrome. The following section addresses three other root causes of conflict.

Political exclusion and lack of readiness for genuine and inclusive dialogue

15. Notwithstanding progress made on democracy and good governance, continued political exclusion, like other forms of social exclusion, remains a causal source of violent conflict in Africa. The marginalization of individuals and groups from participation in political processes reflects deficits in governance that may stem from discriminatory laws and customary practices, "winner-takes-all" politics, non-adherence to the rule of law, the violation of human rights and political intimidation. Women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities and political opposition groups are often the most affected and vulnerable.

16. Political exclusion is exacerbated by the restriction of political space, the intimidation of political opponents and the lack of mechanisms for constructive dialogue and engagement. In instances where those mechanisms exist, disadvantaged and opposition groups may be unwilling to engage owing to fear or a lack of trust and confidence in a government-led process. Consequently, marginalized, opposition and disadvantaged groups have largely tended to resort to other means, including violence, bids for secession and mass protests to express their grievances, clamour for their rights and seek redress for inequalities and discrimination, thus creating fertile ground for mobilization for violent conflict.

17. Since 2011, the international community has witnessed ways in which economic, social and political exclusion in Africa have led to mass mobilization and organized protests against harsh living conditions, poor service delivery, inequality, unemployment, corruption, repression, impunity and injustice. In a few cases, that has resulted in the ousting or resignation of political leaders, evoking a new pattern of political transitions. With a growing youthful population that could easily be mobilized for violence with the use of new technology, notably social media, political and economic exclusion remain a serious threat to stability, peace, security and development on the continent.

18. Inclusive politics, with confidence-building measures where appropriate, is therefore essential for promoting dialogue and participation in political processes, as well as for creating a just, peaceful, prosperous and integrated society. Governments are encouraged to create and ensure enabling conditions and opportunities that promote inclusivity and the participation of marginalized or disadvantaged groups, including by instituting affirmative measures, ensuring human rights and adopting inclusive governance approaches. In that respect, it is imperative that Governments promote genuine and inclusive dialogue with the opposition, as well as with civil society organizations, as a means of reaffirming the social contract. Strategies that contribute to conflict prevention, such as decentralization and power-sharing arrangements, should be utilized as appropriate, as should platforms for reconciliation and transitional justice in post-conflict contexts.

Environmental stresses

19. The pathways linking climate change to security are complex and multilayered, but it is increasingly clear that environmental factors serve as potential risk factors or threat multipliers for conflict. Drought, desertification, land degradation and flooding put strains on livelihoods and are potential triggers for large-scale displacement, which can result in tension, xenophobia and violent conflicts between displaced populations and host communities owing to increased pressure on already scarce resources. In addition, other human-induced environmental issues, such as the illicit exploitation of natural resources, which is prevalent in Africa, disrupt natural ecosystems and wildlife, undermine economic growth and sustainable development and increasingly intersect with corruption and transnational organized crime. Marginalized groups living in rural areas, especially women and children, are the

most affected by environmental degradation owing to their reliance on natural resources for their livelihoods and habitations, and they have little or no alternative means of making a living.

20. Many parts of Africa are equally vulnerable to the profound negative effects of climate change, which take a huge toll on communities and can create fertile ground for conflict and the rise of violent extremism. The interplay between climate change, migration and violent conflicts is perhaps most evident in the Sahel, where the shrinking of Lake Chad has affected the livelihoods of millions of people, deepened poverty, triggered forced displacement and heightened vulnerability to terrorism and violent extremism. Similarly, the Horn of Africa has historically been affected by the effects of climate change and competition over depleted natural resources. The consequences of climate change, such as more frequent and intense droughts, warmer temperatures and the geographical redistribution of pests and diseases, are likely to continue to negatively affect food production and agriculture. If those multiple risks are not addressed through prevention and risk reduction efforts that are rooted in inclusive policies and participatory processes, they could lead to instability and conflict.

21. In addition, countries in the Sahel region as well as in West and Central Africa, notably the Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria, are experiencing the challenges associated with shifting patterns of pastoralist mobility, which is creating severe tension and violent conflicts between herders and farmers. In Nigeria, that has resulted in escalating violence during the reporting period, leading to high fatalities, the destruction of villages and the loss of livelihoods. The situation is closely linked to demographic and ecological pressures, which have reduced the availability of grazing lands, often because of the expansion of farmland, urban development and climate change. The situation is also growing more complex, as it is increasingly linked to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, leading to a need to integrate issues related to climate change into both early warning systems and initiatives for small arms control.

22. Innovative solutions and the development and transfer of clean and environmentally sound technologies are necessary to enhance preparedness and resilience against the effects of climate change. It is therefore imperative to support African countries in applying innovative and technological solutions in critical areas, such as climate-smart agriculture, to enhance agricultural productivity and food security, promote adaption and entrepreneurship, build resilience and achieve sustained peace and sustainable development.

Trends in human insecurity, poor human capacity development and conflicts

23. Human insecurity and poor human capacity development are aspects of social injustice and exclusion that are closely linked to direct and structural violence and are illustrative of unequal power relations and inequitable access to opportunities. At its core, human security is about the rights, security and development of people; therefore, human insecurity is both a root cause and an outcome of conflict.

24. As a root cause, human insecurity, including widespread human rights abuses, systemic poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, increases a population's vulnerability to being exploited for violence, radicalization and terrorism and forced migration. As an outcome, human insecurity is exacerbated during violent conflicts and instability owing to higher levels of human rights violations and violations of humanitarian law, which stem from atrocities, malnutrition and food shortages, forced displacement, human trafficking, the recruitment and use of children by armed groups and forces, and increased sexual violence and systematic rape. That link reaffirms a need to

integrate human rights and humanitarian and development concerns into political and peace processes.

25. In addition, globalization has had both a positive and negative impact on human security trends in Africa. The structural adjustment programmes introduced in the 1980s continue to place a high debt burden on many African countries. Proportions of national budgets for debt servicing have increased, while allocations to health, education and the development of critical infrastructure crucial to alleviating poverty, creating jobs, fulfilling human rights and promoting human security have decreased. The global war on terrorism has also had a considerable impact on human security and humanitarian access, and has increased military spending at the expense of social and economic expenditures. However, efforts are being undertaken to complement military responses to conflicts in Africa with more integrated strategies that encompass development, human rights, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

26. On a more positive note, multinational corporations operating in Africa are increasingly required to implement local content policies, which facilitate human capacity development by promoting the participation and capacity development of nationals in the workforce and increasing the use of local suppliers, goods and services. Local content policies also promote the transfer of knowledge and skills to the local economy, companies and people. As such, they contribute to maximizing the economic and social benefits from the extractive sector, creating decent jobs and stimulating broad-based economic growth. A number of African countries are implementing local content policies as a way of promoting inclusion and preventing environmental degradation, which are two issues that have incited conflict between communities and multinational corporations in the past. It is critical to ensure that local content polices in Africa are aligned with the actions and recommendations contained in the Business and Sustainable Development Commission's flagship report, entitled "Better business, better world", in order to effectively prevent conflicts. Such alignment is simple and highly cost-effective: by creating decent jobs, prioritizing women and youth employment, protecting human rights, investing in local communities and paying their fair share of taxes, businesses will contribute to tackling the root causes of conflict.

27. Another issue directly related to human security and development is the question of an enabling environment for civil society engagement and participation. A strong civil society promotes civic values, increases prospects for transparency and accountability, improves legitimacy and contributes to the prevention of conflicts. In many African countries, civil society participation and engagement is still largely weak or highly politicized. It is critical that public policy making processes be inclusive, and Governments should systematically consult and involve members of civil society, especially women and youth, in those processes in order to adequately reflect their needs and priorities. Similarly, during peace processes, efforts must be made to systematically consult and engage with members of civil society to ensure the inclusion of their perspectives and priorities in peace agreements.

28. Strong, just and accountable institutions are important for safeguarding people from pervasive threats and are required for promoting human security and development in a systematic, comprehensive and preventative way. Therefore, there is a need to invest in strong, non-corrupt, accountable and inclusive institutions, including parliaments, election management bodies and security and justice structures, that are essential for protecting the rights of the African people and contribute to strengthening the conflict-resilience capacities of individuals and communities. Support for and partnerships with civil society organizations, the private sector and regional and subregional organizations are also crucial, given the contributions they make to safeguarding people, communities and livelihoods.

C. Recent efforts to address the root causes of conflicts and promote peace and sustainable development in Africa

29. African countries, the African Union and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms have undertaken a range of initiatives which aim at addressing root causes of conflict and creating conditions for durable peace and sustainable development. Progress has been made in the implementation of Agenda 2063, in particular its first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023), with the launch of three flagship projects, namely Silencing the Guns by 2020, the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the establishment of the single African air transport market.

30. The African Continental Free Trade Area is expected to create a single market for goods and services that encompasses 1.2 billion people and was adopted alongside the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment. When the Protocol enters into force, it is expected to be implemented in a phased manner, promoting visa-free movement and integration. When it welcomed the African Continental Free Trade Area as a tool for preventing inter-State border conflicts and realizing Agenda 2063, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union highlighted its utility for addressing the challenge of irregular migration and enhancing the implementation of the African Union Border Programme.

31. Implementation of the 2016 African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 is also under way. The Road Map underscores the need to pursue peace, security and inclusive socioeconomic development simultaneously. As the implementation deadline is fast approaching, it is urgent to accelerate action on that agenda. In that respect, I commend the two African countries that are the first to submit written reports on their efforts in that regard and encourage other African countries to do same. The United Nations stands ready to assist as necessary upon request.

32. Related to that initiative is the renewed focus the African Union and its regional economic communities and mechanisms have placed on structural conflict prevention. In 2015, the African Union adopted the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, which is currently being implemented to assist States in addressing the root causes of conflict in a holistic manner. The Framework prioritizes solutions that are people-centred and people-driven and addresses the root causes of conflict relating to socioeconomic development, governance, human rights, humanitarian issues, the rule of law, gender and youth, the environment and climate change.

33. Consistent with its designation of 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year, the African Union is intensifying efforts to combat the chronic problem of corruption, which drains the continent of more than $50 billion per year. I welcome the efforts being made to invest in anti-corruption education and sensitization campaigns, especially for young people, and to develop an African common position on asset recovery as a flagship initiative of the anti-corruption year. The United Nations remains committed to supporting African-led efforts to tackle that scourge, including by strengthening South-South cooperation through voluntary exchanges, mutual legal assistance and the sharing of best practices among national anti-corruption commissions, audit agencies and investigative bodies, as well as by supporting efforts to curb tax evasion and illicit financial flows.

34. Further building on the theme of the African Union for 2017, "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth", African Governments and institutions have reaffirmed their strong commitments to reducing youth

unemployment by at least 2 per cent annually. They have adopted the African Union Road Map on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth, pledging to ensure financial services for young people, invest in entrepreneurship development, invest in education and health and create spaces for youth civic and political participation. Those are positive developments and I strongly encourage all African countries to develop their demographic dividend profiles in alignment with the Road Map. The United Nations stands ready to assist African Member States and regional and subregional organizations with that process.

35. Efforts are being made to promote the participation and leadership of African women, at all levels, in preventing conflicts and addressing their root causes. In May 2018, a new African Union gender equality and women's empowerment strategy was adopted to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the African Union and improve the coordination of gender mainstreaming actions at subregional and national levels. The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa), endorsed by both the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the United Nations Security Council, has been working to strengthen women's leadership and participation in mediation processes. In July 2018, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, three joint solidarity missions by the African Union, the United Nations and Sweden were undertaken under the auspices of the African Women Leaders Network to Chad, the Niger and South Sudan. The missions highlighted gender and sexual-based violence, as well as the voices and roles of women in peace, security and development, including with regard to preventing violent extremism and strengthening climate security.

36. The African Union is also taking initial steps, in the context of its Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness, to establish and operationalize an African Union humanitarian agency. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union has emphasized the fact that the agency would steer appropriate and effective humanitarian action on the continent and strengthen continental, regional and national capabilities for prevention, early warning, early response and early post-conflict reconstruction to avoid relapse into protracted conflict situations.

37. At the subregional level, the regional economic communities and mechanisms have adopted essential policies and tools for addressing the root causes of conflict. Their mid- to long-term development plans align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, which requires the coherent implementation of those agendas from the global to the community level. The United Nations will continue to enhance its collaboration with the African Union and regional economic communities and mechanisms to assist in ensuring synergies and coherence in implementation, including in the context of the Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

III. United Nations system support and approach

38. The following section highlights activities undertaken by the United Nations system during the review period, focusing mostly on initiatives and actions that contributed to addressing the root causes of conflict.

A. Peace and security

39. The Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat and the Special Envoys and Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa continued to deploy their

combined resources to support the peaceful resolution of political crises and conflicts and efforts to address their root causes. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia continued to support the efforts of the Government of Somalia to promote reconciliation as a means of addressing root causes of the Somali conflict, including through frequent briefings to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region continued to support the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, together with the African Union and the other guarantors of the Framework, namely the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Efforts were made to combat the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources as well as to enable women, youth and civil society to participate in promoting the objectives of the Framework.

40. Following the launch of a United Nations action plan for Libya in September 2017, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya has been facilitating an inclusive political process aimed at finding consensus on the way forward, encouraging local reconciliation efforts and engaging with armed groups to develop a long-term United Nations strategy to tackle challenges. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa engaged with relevant stakeholders in the region to defuse tensions and advocate for inclusive and genuine political dialogue and the creation of conditions conducive to the holding of peaceful and inclusive elections. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa also engaged in efforts to promote the peaceful resolution of political crises and create a climate for peaceful elections. Together, the two Special Representatives, in collaboration with the United Nations country teams in the affected countries, supported diplomatic, security and humanitarian responses to violence perpetrated by Boko Haram and advocated for the establishment of a joint regional strategy to address the root causes of the crisis. Related to that, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the African Union Commission signed a memorandum of understanding with regard to collaboration and capacity-building on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. In May 2018, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa began a project to strengthen the capacities of States in Central Africa to effectively implement the Kinshasa Convention on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

41. The Peacebuilding Fund provided seed funding for some components of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel and increased the capacity of the United Nations system to deliver as one. Funding was provided for regional, cross-border and national programmes that addressed the structural causes of instability and crisis in the Sahel region across the humanitarian-development, peace and security nexus. In addition, funding targeted catalytic initiatives that kickstarted new longer-term peacebuilding efforts or accelerated existing ones and ensured ownership to increase the likelihood of more sustained peacebuilding change, and those that invested 30 per cent of funding in gender equality. Specific funding was provided to promote reconciliation and security sector reform in Burkina Faso, strengthen national and local infrastructure for peace in Chad, create a youth employment and peacebuilding programme in Mali, promote social cohesion and conflict prevention in Mauritania and set up a human rights and international humanitarian rights law compliance framework for the operations of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

42. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth commenced implementation of a project on youth contributions to sustainable peace in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focusing on three African countries in 2018.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN-Women) provided support to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and SADC in developing regional action plans on women, peace and security.

43. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa continued to provide effective advocacy platforms for African organizations to engage with the United Nations and the wider international community on a range of peace, security, good governance and socioeconomic development issues. Likewise, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation established a dedicated team to facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation on peace and development in Africa.

B. Good governance and social justice

44. During the review period, considerable efforts were made to promote the engagement of civil society organizations in democratic processes and governance. The United Nations Democracy Fund continued to empower civil society organizations in Africa and mobilized communities to activate citizen watch systems to combat the trafficking of girls in Benin. UNDP engaged civil society in strengthening dialogue for transitional justice and victims' voices in South Sudan and supported social healing initiatives through community dialogues in Rwanda.

45. UNDP support included strengthening the capacity of public institutions for the delivery of quality basic services, including improved health-care systems. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Global Land Tool Network worked with Governments, non-governmental stakeholders and other United Nations entities to address land issues in Africa. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provided capacity-building assistance to Member States in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions to strengthen the credibility and accountability of their criminal justice systems, thereby increasing people's confidence that the system would address some of the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism.

C. Human rights protection and humanitarian action

46. With regard to human rights, the first high-level dialogue on human rights between the African Union and the United Nations was held in Addis Ababa on 24 April 2018. The two organizations agreed to enhance collaboration in human rights and peace and security, including with regard to the women, peace and security agenda, and the compliance and accountability frameworks for African Union peace support operations. The Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect cooperated with Member States, the African Union and regional economic communities and mechanisms to integrate the risk factors for atrocity crimes into early warning and early response mechanisms.

47. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued its work to prevent human rights violations, improve the protection of civilians and implement the Human Rights Up Front initiative. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, OHCHR worked closely with Parliament, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the National Human Rights Commission and non-governmental organizations to strengthen their capacities with regard to human rights. In Mali, the advocacy of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict resulted in the inclusion of child protection standards in the compliance framework for human rights developed by the United Nations and the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel.

56. The implementation of those instruments by the African Union and the regional economic communities and mechanisms have, however, been piecemeal, with more focus given to the direct or operational dimensions, as their application has largely evolved in response to specific situations or identified needs on the ground. For instance, key pillars and tools of the African Peace and Security Architecture, such as the Continental Early Warning System; the Panel of the Wise, including FemWise-Africa; the election observer missions of the African Union; and the African Union high-level panels and special envoys have been institutionalized and are all being utilized for the prevention and mediation of conflicts. On the other hand, much remains to be done to operationalize instruments for structural prevention, including the African Peace and Security Architecture Road Map for 2016–2020, Agenda 2063 and the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, all of which call for a systematic and strategic focus to address the root, proximate and structural causes of conflict.

57. The adoption by the Peace and Security Council of the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework as a comprehensive tool for preventive action demonstrates the commitment the African Union is making to bridge existing gaps in the implementation of its instruments for operational and structural prevention. Through the Framework, the African Union Commission is promoting a coordinated Commission-wide approach to conflict prevention. An interdepartmental task force on conflict prevention has been established to strengthen coordination within the Commission as well as among the African Union, the regional economic communities and mechanisms and other partners, on the basis of complementarity, comparative advantage, burden-sharing and collective responsibility.

58. The African Union is also assisting its member States, upon request, with their respective country structural vulnerability assessments: a tool to facilitate the early identification of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict that covers political, economic, social and environmental factors. At the same time, the African Union is supporting States in the development of their country structural vulnerability mitigation strategies, which define relevant implementation modalities for structural prevention and mitigation options. A technical working group on structural conflict prevention in Africa was also established to support that process, comprising the African Union, regional economic communities and mechanisms, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Development Bank and UNDP. So far, however, only a few African countries have volunteered to undertake their structural vulnerability assessments. It is imperative that African countries utilize that process and possibly mainstream it into other existing national mechanisms such as their national development plans and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

59. The regional economic communities and mechanisms are also developing their capacities for conflict prevention, covering both operational and structural dimensions. With regard to the former, they have recorded tangible progress on the development of early warning systems and the provision of mediation and mediation support and preventive diplomacy and election observation, though progress is uneven and varies in terms of their respective mandates, capacities and resources. Regarding the latter, the regional economic communities and mechanisms, like the African Union, have a range of instruments that cover socioeconomic development, democracy, elections, good governance, humanitarian relief and regional integration, providing a comprehensive framework for coordinated and concerted actions to address structural causes of conflict. However, the implementation of those instruments does not necessarily include a conflict-sensitive or prevention focus. Nevertheless, there is a growing awareness among the regional economic communities and mechanisms of the need to link development work with conflict prevention. That resonates with a key finding of the 2018 joint United Nations-World

Bank publication entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, which calls for the integration of prevention measures into development policies and efforts, and for development actors to support national and regional conflict prevention agendas.

60. Collaboration and coordination at various levels are highly essential for strengthening conflict prevention capacities on the continent. There is a need to increase partnerships on prevention among the regional economic communities and mechanisms, as well as among the African Union, regional economic communities and mechanisms and the United Nations, and with African civil society organizations and the private sector, on the basis of comparative advantages. As I reaffirmed during the second United Nations-African Union Annual Conference, held in Addis Ababa on 9 July 2018, the United Nations is committed to further deepening the strategic partnership with the African Union and the regional economic communities and mechanisms. In that context, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and I also reiterated our call for the strengthening of a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to conflict prevention that addresses the root causes of conflicts, strengthens political processes and respect for the rule of law and promotes sustainable and inclusive development, including through the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel.

A. What a renewed focus on structural conflict prevention in Africa entails

61. As illustrated above, Africa has a plethora of instruments for conflict prevention, which provide a comprehensive, integrated and inclusive framework for addressing immediate triggers and structural causes of conflict in a more systematic and strategic manner. What is needed is genuine political will and capacity, including financial resources, for effective implementation that translates existing conflict prevention instruments into a reality for the African people.

62. To effectively address the structural causes of conflicts, implementation efforts should also aim at building and strengthening conflict prevention capacities, especially at the local level. Support for existing traditional or community conflict prevention mechanisms is critical, as is the need to enhance the capacities of key national bodies such as parliaments, security and justice institutions and election management bodies. For instance, support for national and local infrastructures for peace and insider mediation will help to develop, equip and empower national and local actors with the appropriate skills for mediation, negotiation and dialogue, thereby contributing to building resilient societies and preventing outbreaks of violent conflicts. As seen in countries such as Ghana and Kenya, national infrastructures for peace provide an inclusive platform for structured collaboration among State authorities; civil society, including women, youth and traditional and faith-based leaders, academia and think tanks; and the private sector to prevent and resolve conflicts. Such initiatives, which have proved useful for conflict prevention efforts on the ground, should be replicated and scaled up across Africa and beyond.

63. Related to that is the crucial need for national ownership of conflict prevention to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. As noted above, many of the root causes of conflicts are linked to multiple factors, including governance deficits. Consequently, the ownership and leadership of national Governments, as well as of other stakeholders, including civil society, women and youth, are essential to preventing violent conflicts, addressing their root causes and sustaining peace.

64. Given their roles in facilitating and assisting States with structural prevention, it is imperative that the African Union and the regional economic communities and

mechanisms further strengthen their capacities to mainstream prevention into all their programmes and activities. Such mainstreaming efforts should span the programme development cycle, from conceptualization and design to monitoring, reporting and evaluating and assessing impact. The United Nations is doing the same. In February 2018, I introduced an integrated platform on prevention, which will provide a conceptual and operational framework for translating and integrating my vision on conflict prevention across all pillars of our work on peace and security, human rights and development. The platform will consist of shared but differentiated responsibilities for all United Nations actors at three levels, country, regional and headquarters, to overcome fragmentation and consolidate our capacities to meet prevention challenges.

65. Integral to the strengthening of the capacities of the African Union and the regional economic communities and mechanisms is the need to further improve synergies and coordinated action between the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture, which are two important and interlinked mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. Greater synergies between the two architectures, at both the strategic and the operational level, will help to better address the root causes of conflict on the continent. In the context of their Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the African Union and the United Nations will work accordingly to support relevant aspects of the African Governance Architecture.

B. Continued United Nations engagement and support for conflict prevention in Africa

66. Over the past two decades, the United Nations has been consistent in providing policy, technical, financial and capacity development support on conflict prevention to African Governments, regional and subregional organizations and civil society groups. It remains committed to assisting African leaders and people in their efforts to find durable Africa-led solutions to silencing the guns, addressing root causes of conflicts, building strong institutions and promoting sustainable and inclusive development.

67. Consistent with the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, the United Nations will continue to support the development of national and local infrastructures for peace. Through the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention of UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs, the Organization will continue to provide analytical capacity to promote conflict-sensitive and -preventive programming in a cross-pillar and holistic manner, as well as to guide its own initiatives in African countries to support national conflict prevention and capacity-building efforts. In addition, in the context of the Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations, signed in 2017, and the Strategic Partnership Framework for the 2030 Agenda, signed in May 2018, the United Nations and the World Bank will develop joint analyses and tools for exploring new investment approaches for conflict prevention and scale up impact by leveraging financing. Both organizations will also strengthen their collaboration through the implementation of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, in the context of the joint African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

68. The United Nations regional political offices will sustain their work, in cooperation with Member States and African regional and subregional organizations, in providing early warning and supporting efforts to address transnational and regional grievances. For example, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the

Sahel and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa will continue to play a prominent facilitating role in support of my good offices mandate in addressing emerging or incipient conflict. Their efforts will remain critical to addressing cross-border or cross-cutting issues related to the Sahel region and the Lake Chad basin.

69. The 16 United Nations special political missions deployed in or working exclusively on situations in Africa will continue to undertake a broad array of preventive functions, ranging from good offices support for national dialogue processes to election monitoring and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. The United Nations will also continue to support the strengthening of the mediation capacity of African regional and subregional organizations, building on the support already being provided to the African Union, ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States and IGAD.

70. As it continues to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which itself is a global framework for cooperation to prevent violent conflicts and promote sustainable development, the United Nations will encourage the mainstreaming of conflict prevention in the voluntary national reviews of Member States. That is fundamental because, as noted above, a considerable number of African countries plan to present their reviews by 2019. Similar efforts will be encouraged at the regional and subregional level. For instance, in the context of the Sahel region, the recalibration of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel enabled a better repositioning of the 2030 Agenda at the core of the international response in the Sahel. The inclusive process conducted to develop the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel contributed to ensuring ownership by and leadership of the countries of the region. The Special Adviser for the Sahel will continue working closely with national and regional actors, including the African Union, to ensure greater alignment of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel with national and regional priorities.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

71. Conflict prevention lies at the core of the mandate of the United Nations, cutting across all pillars of its work. It is also an integral component of the work of African regional and subregional organizations, notably the African Union and the regional economic communities and mechanisms, and is vital to the realization of the shared continental vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. Conflict prevention is therefore not only a moral and legal obligation for the United Nations, the African Union and regional economic communities and mechanisms but also a cornerstone of our collective security and the realization of inclusive and sustainable development.

72. As emphasized in the present report, conflict prevention consists of a range of both operational and structural prevention actions, which are undertaken in the short and long term to address both the proximate and the root causes of conflicts. Member States have the primary responsibility for conflict prevention, and such prevention is ultimately about their capability to build resilience to violent conflicts, strengthen local capacities to build and sustain peace and promote sustainable development. The United Nations, the African Union and regional economic communities and mechanisms play a role in assisting States in those efforts and have developed their respective comprehensive and coherent conflict prevention strategies and tools in that regard. While laudable progress has been made, the gains have also been uneven. In some cases, full implementation of the plethora of conflict prevention instruments is still lagging, and there is an increasing need to enhance collective efforts to prevent conflicts at all stages and address their root causes.

73. Consistent with the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, it is therefore imperative for regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Development Bank and the regional economic communities and mechanisms to enhance their work on prevention. They should implement and mainstream the existing conflict prevention instruments they have adopted, including those on governance, democracy, elections, anti-corruption measures, human rights and border management, which are vital for addressing the structural causes of conflict.

74. African countries are encouraged to promote inclusive politics and facilitate and support constructive mechanisms for dialogue with all segments of society. In addition, it is important that they foster inclusive economies by empowering women, youth and other marginalized groups, creating decent jobs for their growing youth populations and promoting gender equality and women's leadership in the economic, financial and corporate sectors.

75. Given the link between the environment and conflict, African countries could, as a matter of urgency, implement measures to reinforce resilience and preparedness for climate change, including by ensuring adaptation strategies, promoting food security, expanding social safety nets and preserving the environment. In addition, it is important that they integrate issues related to climate change into national early warning mechanisms.

76. African civil society groups, including academics and think tanks, can further assist those efforts by undertaking critical research on factors that facilitate peace and resilience on the continent, as they may be different from those that cause conflict and violence.

77. The United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities and mechanisms must continue to work towards greater unity of purpose in ensuring a coordinated approach to implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both of which are useful for addressing the structural factors and root causes of conflict in Africa. Given the proliferation of instruments, each organization is called upon to further enhance coherence, coordination and synergies in their support to African Member States and civil society organizations. Mechanisms such as the United Nations-African Union Annual Conference, the desk-to-desk consultations, the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the United Nations interdepartmental task force on African affairs provide useful platforms for improving consultation, information exchange and joint planning in our efforts to foster coordinated support for Africa's peace and development priorities.

78. Since assuming office, I have made conflict prevention and our partnership with Africa, through the African Union, two important priorities, with a vision that all actions are taken to assist African countries in averting the outbreak or recurrence of crises and violent conflicts, which have a negative impact on civilian populations and undermine institutions and capacities for peace and development. The Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have provided a blueprint for operationalizing those priorities. During the second United Nations-African Union Annual Conference, the two organizations reviewed the progress they had made in implementing the Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and endorsed an action plan on the Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations will continue to work towards ensuring coherence in the implementation of those Frameworks and their action plans. There is no doubt that coherent implementation of the two Frameworks will contribute to preventing violent conflicts, addressing their root causes and advancing our shared effort for durable peace and inclusive sustainable development in Africa.

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Sustainable development

Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection, submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution 71/240.

* A/73/150.

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Report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection

I. Introduction

1. The Secretary-General was requested to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, a report on the implementation of resolution 71/240, entitled "Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection", including recommendations on ways and means to promote sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, as a tool for fighting poverty and promoting sustainable development. As the specialized agency of the United Nations system vested with a central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, UNWTO was, in turn, requested to take the lead in the preparation of the present report.

2. The advances described in the present report reflect the results from a survey conducted in 2018 among all Member States on the review of national approaches to the implementation of resolution 71/240, as well as the knowledge gained by UNWTO through its active engagement in events, initiatives, research and other activities with its member States and affiliate members and other relevant stakeholders.

II. Developments since the adoption of resolution 71/240

A. Advances in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

3. By including three targets specifically related to the tourism sector in the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda recognizes the important role tourism can play in advancing sustainable development and accelerating progress across all 17 Goals.

4. To promote the sector's important role as a catalyst for positive change and as an instrument for achieving the Goals and fostering advances in all three dimensions of sustainability, the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/193, proclaimed 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The International Year was designated 50 years after the celebration of the International Tourist Year in 1967, under the slogan "Tourism — Passport to Peace", and 15 years after the International Year of Ecotourism was commemorated in 2002. The specific aim of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development was to raise awareness of tourism's contribution to sustainable development among both decision makers and the general public, while mobilizing all stakeholders to work together to make tourism a catalyst for positive change.

5. The International Year provided a unique opportunity to recognize the important role of well-managed tourism as an instrument, inter alia, for sustainable development, economic diversification, eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, preserving cultural heritage and strengthening peace in the world. To ensure continuity of the initiatives and actions initiated in 2017, various other activities are being implemented, such as the online platform "Tourism for SDGs —

journey to 2030". The platform, developed with the support of Switzerland, was launched jointly with UNWTO on the sidelines of the Economic and Social Council high-level political forum on sustainable development as a new tool aimed at advancing the contributions of tourism to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.[1]

B. Accelerating the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism sector

6. With the goal of further driving the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns, the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the One Planet network (formerly, the 10-Year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns) has continued its cooperative efforts to connect actors from all around the world to advance the development of tourism that is more sustainable and to scale up initiatives and partnerships to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

7. The portfolio of work of the Sustainable Tourism Programme includes all initiatives carried out by more than 90 partners and over 390 activities implemented in 2015, 2016 and 2017, resulting in a programme portfolio value of over $25 million. Since 2017, the programme has continued to focus on its four thematic priorities: integrating sustainable consumption and production into policies; generating evidence on sustainable consumption and production; mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production practices; and enhancing the financing of sustainable consumption and production. On the basis its core activities, the Sustainable Tourism Programme continues to generate added value for its members through:

(a) Advocacy materials that raise the visibility of the efforts of network members, such as the 2017 calendar of events featuring the celebrations of network members during the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development through various social media platforms;

(b) Knowledge-sharing opportunities through the participation of members in public forums such as the World Circular Economy Forum (Helsinki, June 2017), the World Conservation Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (Honolulu, United States of America, September 2016) and the International Tourism Trade Fair (Madrid, January 2015), as well as through the organization and implementation of webinars to disseminate experiences and expertise with interested participants;

(c) Technical support for the implementation of projects and the organization of events, such as the forums on sustainable and responsible tourism held in Croatia and the Republic of Korea in June 2017, the workshop on sustainable development and the circular economy, held in French Polynesia in November 2017 and the three tourism projects supported by the trust fund for the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

8. Since 2016, the Sustainable Tourism Programme has organized, in conjunction with a number of partners worldwide, a variety of events to advance discussions on the core subjects of the Programme. One of the important milestones achieved in 2017 was the third International Symposium and Annual Conference of the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10-Year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, hosted by the Botswana Tourism Organization

[1] Further details on the activities and impacts of the International Year can be consulted in the report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the implementation of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017 (A/73/280).

in Kasane, Botswana, in December 2017. The event focused on empowering the sustainability of tourism destinations through innovation and allowed participants to exchange experiences and knowledge of innovative approaches to enhance tourism and conservation planning, financing and marketing. It also served to promote the development and adoption of the "Kasane call to action on Sustainable consumption and production in Tourism: the tourism we want", which had been prepared as the network's contribution to the legacy of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

9. Webinars organized by the Sustainable Tourism Programme, in cooperation with other entities, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Government of France, have become an important tool for sharing experiences with interested stakeholders from within and outside the network. Since 2016, a total of 13 webinars have been organized with more than 800 participants from all around the world. Topics covered have included climate change, small- and medium-sized enterprises, tourism planning, the circular economy, sustainability catalysts, financing sustainable development, "overtourism" in protected areas and sustainable food management. To enable further global dissemination, all the webinars have been made available online by the Programme.

10. A key approach to addressing the challenge of decoupling growth from resource use is to shift away from linear to circular consumption and production patterns, promoting closed material loops along the entire value chain. Circularity is increasingly the focus of One Planet network webinars, conferences and research initiatives. The network has provided, for example, technical support for and input to a seminar on sustainable and responsible tourism, hosted by the local government of French Polynesia in Papeete on 20 and 21 November 2017, as the second in a series of three seminars held under the framework of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council project on sustainable development and the circular economy.

11. In order to build on these efforts and further advance thinking on the circular economy within tourism, during the high-level political forum on sustainable development held in in New York from 9 to 18 July, the sustainable buildings and construction programme of the One Planet network, together with UNEP and the Governments of Bhutan, Botswana, Finland and Mexico, held a side event to showcase how circular economy solutions in the tourism and construction sectors could accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 12, while also contributing to sustainable and resilient societies.

C. Establishing appropriate national policies, guidelines and institutions

12. Supporting stakeholders in creating and implementing relevant policy frameworks that foster sustainable development remains a key responsibility of the tourism sector. To support national Governments with the task, UNWTO, in collaboration with UNEP and supported by the Government of France, carried out research between April 2016 and June 2018 on the integration of sustainable consumption and production into national tourism policies so as to gain insights into the current status quo around the world and to inspire further action from tourism stakeholders to accelerate sustainable consumption and production. The summary of the resulting baseline report on the integration of sustainable consumption and production patterns into tourism policies was presented at the high-level political forum in July 2018. The full report is forthcoming.

13. The methodology for the research was based on the indicators of success of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, which provide a breakdown of the concept of sustainable consumption and production into tangible elements or "impact areas", such as the protection of biodiversity, sustainable land use, energy efficiency, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, water use efficiency and waste reduction. It included a global survey on tourism planning, which garnered 75 responses, a systematic review of 73 national tourism polices, interviews with 11 experts from national tourism authorities, consultations with key stakeholders and an assessment of connected datasets and policy documents, including the implementation plans of the three Rio Conventions (Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). In total, the project covered 101 States (64 per cent of all UNWTO member States) from all regions of the world.

14. According to the findings in the report, national tourism policies present a good starting point for sustainable consumption and production to become an essential element of long-term planning for tourism development. Also highlighted in the is the need to take urgent action to decouple tourism's growth from the use of natural resources. The findings are broken down into six main areas: the evolution of national institutional structures for tourism; common elements of national tourism planning; overall commitment of national tourism policies to sustainable consumption and production and sustainable development; the existence of policy instruments addressing environmental challenges of the tourism sector; implementation of national tourism policies and the monitoring of progress; and other connections between national tourism policies and the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 12.

15. Five recommended strategic approaches for policymakers are provided in the report, with the aim of accelerating the integration of sustainable consumption and production into national tourism policies and its implementation on the ground. These include using the Sustainable Development Goals as a compass and prioritizing Goal 12; paving the way towards implementation by outlining sustainable consumption and production policy instruments; prioritizing measurement and monitoring and making data available; incorporating spatial data to visualize the interactions with the environment; and embracing innovative approaches, particularly circularity. Ultimately, the report's findings area aimed at supporting tourism stakeholders in their endeavours to advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 12, through responsible planning and policymaking.

D. Findings of the World Tourism Organization implementation survey on resolution 71/240

16. In early 2018, UNWTO conducted its survey on the implementation of resolution 71/240, and collected input from all Member States and other international organizations on the development and advances made with regard to the areas covered in the resolution. The answers provided by the 19 respondents to the concept note gave insights into a variety of efforts related to mainstreaming biodiversity, climate change, poverty eradication and inclusive development that have been implemented in different countries since 2016. Overall, responses to the survey indicated that Sustainable Development Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere) and Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), closely followed by Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) are currently considered especially relevant for the sustainable development of tourism.

Mainstreaming biodiversity and general considerations

17. Unique cultural and natural assets, such as pristine beaches, coral reefs and biodiversity, provide economic and financial value to sustainable tourism and vice versa. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and partners are supporting field surveys to estimate the full socioeconomic benefits of protected areas and related tourism activities. The South Luangwa National Park in Zambia, for example, generated 1,821 direct jobs, $14.8 million in value added, $2.9 million from park fees and $2.6 million and $3.6 million from business taxes in 2016. Protected areas in Brazil have triggered more than $347 million in direct sales and $194 million in value added to gross domestic product and have supported 23,813 jobs.

18. UNDP works in partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to nurture economic and financial opportunities and reduce harmful impacts of tourism operations. In Guatemala, UNDP and GEF partnered to maximize the value of the "prayer for rain" ancestral celebration, which attracts thousands of visitors, without harming the area that contains Chicabal Volcano and Chicabal Lake and benefiting local communities. Results included a 95 per cent reduction in solid waste and the introduction of a new entrance fee system to support conservation.

19. Additional opportunities for sustainable tourism ventures include the project on strengthening marine protected areas to conserve marine key biodiversity areas, which has prompted the appraisal of ecotourism opportunities in 15 marine protected areas and opportunity assessments conducted in 12 Tanzanian reserves, which have led to a 25-fold increase in the number of visitors in certain areas thanks to recommendations and additional investments. Even in conflict-prone contexts, sustainable tourism can support the survival of cultural and natural assets, such as in the surroundings of the crystal-clear lakes of Band-e-Amir in Afghanistan, which attract nearly 200,000 visitors per year. Further efforts should lead to replicating and adapting initiatives coming from local and indigenous communities, such as the Raja Ampat Homestay Association, which is an Equator Prize winner and network of over 80 community-owned ecotourism businesses operating in Papua and West Papua.

20. Member States have mainstreamed biodiversity in the tourism sector by strengthening planning initiatives for the public use of protected areas, such as in the case of Uruguay, where such a project was developed within the framework of an agreement between the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment and the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, with the participation of the national agency for research and innovation and technical support from the non-governmental organization Retos al Sur.

21. The use of voluntary instruments, such as certification, which address the protection of biodiversity was emphasized in Uruguay as a valuable tool for recognizing good practices in the accommodation sector. Environmental management and climate change action are also relevant to the sector, including an emphasis on energy efficiency, sustainable water use, sustainable waste management facilities and adapting to climate change.

22. El Salvador is seeking to incorporate biodiversity into tourism activities at the national level, through strategies such as "living villages" and through projects on biodiversity, fisheries and tourism. Some of the barriers to implementing the strategies, however, include a lack of coordination between public and private actors, poor return on investment in the short term and the persistence of practices that adversely affect the environment.

23. In its 2013–2018 national development plan, Mexico acknowledges the importance of tourism for job creation, developing markets for small and medium-

sized enterprises and protecting the natural and cultural richness of the country. Objective 5 of the tourism sectoral plan 2013–2018 is aimed at guiding the sector towards promoting the sustainable development of tourism destinations and increasing the social and economic benefits of the recipient communities.

24. In the Dominican Republic, the issue of biodiversity with regard to tourism is regulated by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, in particular its Coastal and Marine Affairs subdivision. According to the plan, the development of tourism must comply with environmental requirements, at both the construction and operational phases of project, including with regard to hotels and other sector-related facilities.

25. The National Council of Protected Areas of Guatemala, responsible for the management of protected areas and biodiversity, has strengthened the capacity of its personnel through training on such issues as conservation, tourism and planning. The key driver of the master plan for sustainable tourism 2015–2025 is to develop tourism according to global sustainable tourism criteria. Some of the barriers encountered include a lack of financial resources for the full implementation of plans and projects and a lack of awareness on sustainability and on the need to support the undertakings.

26. Panama has mainstreamed biodiversity through initiatives promoted by the Ministry of Environment. One of its five strategic lines of action is the development of green tourism in protected areas, aimed at promoting biodiversity conservation through the development of low-impact ecotourism with local communities and the private sector. The efforts are carried out jointly with the Panama Tourism Authority the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, the Natura Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank and GEF. Other ecotourism activities aimed at safeguarding biodiversity include promoting ecotourism as a tool for conservation and science; participatory monitoring of the harpy eagle in the Chagres National Park and of the jaguar in Darien National Park and Portobelo National Park; developing plans for the public use of protected areas; and developing standards for sustainable tourism and the involvement of local communities.

27. The Panamanian environmental agenda 2014–2019 emphasizes the co-management of protected areas with organized community groups for protected areas — both marine and terrestrial — and strengthened management and active conservation of protected areas through environmental education and investment programmes, environmental community business, low-impact ecotourism, volunteer work and other activities and the institutionalization of the concept and management of biological corridors. Some obstacles identified by Panama for mainstreaming biodiversity include building effective coordination mechanisms for public, private and local communities, addressing land-use conflicts in protected areas and building credibility in processes towards working with local communities.

28. By Executive Decree No. 59 of 9 March 2016, Panama established a mechanism for the shared management of areas belonging to the national system of protected areas in Panama, administered by the Ministry of Environment, for the conservation of biodiversity. Through its national biodiversity strategy and action plan, Panama recognizes the need to integrate other sectors beyond the environmental sector for the conservation of biological diversity. Concessions, permits and other tools are among the instruments that have been widely used to achieve these purposes.

29. The environmental policy of the tourism sector of Peru establishes guidelines for the implementation of measures that contribute to the control and prevention of environmental pollution and the conservation of biodiversity. In the policy, Peru recognize the need for a comprehensive vision for the sustainable use of natural resources to ensure the sustainability of biodiversity.

30. The Seychelles sustainable tourism label contributes to biodiversity and environmental conservation in the country. The need to protect biodiversity is also mainstreamed through environmental impact assessments. Furthermore, the national biodiversity strategy and action plan of Seychelles takes into account different sectors including tourism.

31. Trinidad and Tobago has identified ecotourism as an area that will support development in the country. As a result, a draft ecotourism policy has been developed and is being refined. Furthermore, some of the more successful ecotourism organizations in the country, such as Nature Seekers and Save Our Sea Turtles, have taken the lead in the development of biodiversity-related projects focusing on conservation efforts for endangered sea turtles and on initiatives that protect and preserve local ecosystems.

32. Some of the success factors identified by Trinidad and Tobago for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector include the determination of some communities to preserve, conserve and protect the environment, recognizing its impact on their ability to benefit economically, socioculturally and environmentally; the creation of subcommittees engaged in protecting and preserving biodiversity; and training and capacity-building in communities.

33. Sustainable tourism is at the heart of the 2017–2021 national tourism development plan of Costa Rica, including different sustainability standards for the tourism sector.

34. The 2014 Venezuelan law on fostering sustainable tourism as a community-based and rural activity is aimed promoting and developing sustainable and responsible tourism as a community and social activity, with full respect for the environment and biodiversity. Tourism development of low environmental impact is encouraged and rewarded in order to preserve hydrographical resources, energy, forestry, biodiversity, protected areas, flora, wildlife and any other environmental category or area as determined by law.

35. Bhutan has begun to align and integrate tourism plans and programmes with biodiversity plans and programmes to ensure that they are complementary. Meanwhile, Turkey reports numerous laws, regulations, and strategies that relate to biodiversity. Sudan is implementing its national policies on biodiversity through its Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources.

36. Biodiversity is considered an asset of Slovenian tourism, especially ecotourism. The Nature Conservation Act is strictly enforced. Actions that might have a negative impact on natural resources or biodiversity are prohibited, and an environmental impact assessment is a prerequisite for any activity in the natural environment.

37. In December 2014, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism launched its "Biodiversity Strategy Austria 2020+", according to which Austria sets goals and measurements to preserve the country's biological diversity. Under target 5 of the strategy, tourism and leisure activities are addressed specifically in line with biodiversity activities. It is considered essential that tourism and leisure activities be controlled, paying particular attention to ecologically sensitive areas. In addition, the guidelines on environmental labels for the tourism and leisure industries include biodiversity criteria.

38. The UNWTO/Chimelong Initiative on Wildlife and Sustainable Tourism was established thanks to a contribution from the Chimelong Group, based in Guandong, China). Through the initiative, training seminars were held in 2017 and 2018 for tourism officials on tourism and biodiversity conservation in Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea and the Niger, and on wildlife and sustainable

tourism in Bangladesh. Regional seminars were also held in Botswana and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on media relations for wildlife and sustainable tourism, in which media officers from several African countries participated. In 2018, UNWTO organized a regional seminar on climate change, biodiversity and sustainable tourism development in Fiji and has launched projects on sustainable tourism and wildlife conservation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe.

Climate Change

39. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States recognized the scale and opportunity of the links between climate change and sustainable development. Sustainable Development Goal 13 is dedicated to addressing the need to take urgent action on the issue of climate change, which is seen as being of cross-cutting relevance to ensure the successful implementation of all 17 Goals.

40. According to approximately 40 per cent of nationally determined contributions, tourism is acknowledged either as a country priority, as part of mitigation and adaptation strategies, or as a sector vulnerable to climate change. At the international level, tourism also provides opportunities for increased acceleration of climate action. Nevertheless, as was concluded during the discussions held at the 2016 International Symposium of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns on the occasion of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech, Morocco, the lack of a sectoral perspective does not allow for links to be created between the contribution of the tourism sector to the nationally determined contributions and the efforts being undertaken by tourism stakeholders operating internationally.

41. In order to promote evidence-based decision-making and to fill the knowledge gap in the relationship between climate change and tourism, UNWTO and the International Transport Forum are currently engaged in research on the global level of carbon dioxide emissions produced by the tourism sector, which will serve to update previous estimates and provide actionable policy recommendations for the sector.

42. The Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism and the Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology have jointly launched a new climate and energy strategy, "Mission 2030", in which the shift to low-emission mobility is directly addressed. The tourism sector is also mentioned with regard to digitalization for new mobility services. Electro-mobility (or e-mobility) is fostered under the strategy and "tourism mobility days" are organized regularly, as in 2017, under the Austrian Presidency of the Alpine Convention and under the umbrella of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

43. Zambia is also looking at tourism in the context of its existing climate change strategy, while Sudan has a draft plan on the issue, to be finalized in 2019. Guatemala has national regulatory policies on climate change.

44. A shift in modes of transportation is being considered in Bhutan, which is advancing its efforts towards the introduction of electric vehicles, while Seychelles is transforming its energy sector and has a road map for renewable energy that specifies links to the tourism sector, including regarding e-mobility). Poland has seen improvements regarding e-mobility.

45. The Vision 2030 national development strategy of Trinidad and Tobago (2016–2030) serves to address climate change issues. Reference is made in the strategy to the transportation sector and the goals of reducing its carbon footprint through

reductions in fossil-fuel use and improved energy efficiency and of increasing the use of clean and renewable energy technologies.

46. Uruguay has a national climate change policy that addresses various dimensions, including governance. In addition, in 2018, Uruguay launched the first electrical pathway of Latin America, in the La Plata area along the Atlantic coast of the country, where the majority of the country's beach destinations are located. The Uruguayan coastal zone receives more than 70 per cent of visitors, and almost 80 per cent of residents live there. Some 95 per cent of foreign currency income from tourism and 86 per cent of tourism expenditure by residents are concentrated in that area of the country, according to data from 2015.

47. The national climate change strategy of Mexico provides guidance on actions to be taken on the issue over the next 40 years. A long-term course of action is outlined in the strategy to improve the health and quality of life of the population, as well as for turning Mexico into a society with greater resilience. The strategy is the result of joint participation by citizens, businesses and academics with the Government of Mexico. Consideration is given to the tourism sector within the strategy, and lines of action for transportation in general are outlined, not just for tourism.

48. The climate change strategy of the Dominican Republic includes, in general terms, air and land transportation. Regarding the tourism sector in particular, measures for good practice related to energy efficiency, the rational use of water and the disposal of solid waste are being implemented.

49. Panama is considering the climate change effects of modes of transport and is working towards obtaining financing from the Green Climate Fund to develop projects that would serve as components of its integrated transport system, referred to within the national comprehensive plan for sustainable urban mobility.

50. As 60 per cent of international arrivals in Peru are by air, operational and technological improvements that are consistent with the country's climate change strategy include a shift to the use of alternative fuels and market-based measures. Such changes are important, given the positioning of the aviation sector as the main mode of transport.

Poverty eradication and inclusive development, including for the empowerment of women, youth and people with disabilities and involvement of indigenous and local communities

51. The World Customs Organization has deployed many initiatives dedicated to facilitating the cross-border movements of goods and people to improve economic competitiveness and eradicate poverty, while taking into account the need to protect societies from the undesirable effects of cross-border movements.

52. As part of the measures taken to ensure the empowerment of women and participation of indigenous and local communities and the incorporation of their knowledge, culture, heritage and values into sustainable tourism, Uruguay has established a "tourist village award". The award serves to recognize the value added by local communities to the culture of the destination and the promotion of sustainable tourism (through improving employment, recovering pride and local knowledge and caring for natural and local resources), in villages of under 5,000 inhabitants.

53. Furthermore, the UNDP Gender Equality Seal, which has been implemented in Uruguay, provides recognition, after a pioneer certification process, of efforts to identify and address gender gaps within individual organizations. Women-led initiatives are also being promoted in the country, and the Gender Commission of the Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay has undertaken an "at all costs" programme for

contracting local artists for public events, which gives a greater weight to female artists.

54. In El Salvador, indigenous communities have been included in the development of ecotourism projects, experience-sharing and the development of tourist products. In addition, specific studies for the empowerment of women in tourism activities have been conducted.

55. Guatemala has in place various mechanisms for the participation of women, including its national policy for the promotion and integral development of women. Furthermore, institutions including the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and Ministry of Culture and Sports include within their training programmes oriented to the empowerment of women in their local contexts, for the Mayan, Garifuna, and Xinca peoples.

56. The Ministry of Environment of Panama has so far supported the establishment of four co-management agreements intended to benefit directly the most impoverished populations. In addition, it has fostered alliances with the national Authority for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to train women artisans as part of an entrepreneurship programme. Also, within its strategy for the strengthening of tourist destinations, it coordinated with entities such as the Authority and the National Directorate of Crafts to strengthen the role of craftspeople and women's participation.

57. To enhance women's participation in the production and marketing of handicrafts and in community-based tourism initiatives, the Peruvian programme "Turismo Emprende" gave preference to proposals that served to promote the empowerment of women, cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. Within the framework of social tourism intervention actions, access by and participation of single mothers and young women is facilitated in the tourism sector so that they can directly benefit from these activities. The national community-based rural tourism strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru promotes the development of quality tourism in the communities of all three regions of Peru (coast, mountain zone and rainforest). Working with communities, empowering women and recovering traditional knowledge are, therefore, essential components for the effective implementation of the strategy.

58. The national tourism policy 2010 of Trinidad and Tobago addresses the participation of women, indigenous and local communities. Currently, the Ministry of Tourism is in the process of finalizing subpolicies relating to these groups, including in the areas of ecotourism and community-based tourism. Through the policies, the country will set out the objectives, and a draft implementation plan will identify the actions and activities that will be undertaken to ensure their achievement.

59. A micro finance scheme has been established in Sudan for such groups, while Uruguay has a small grants fund earmarked for civil society initiatives. Poland has introduced the Employment of People with Disabilities Act and the Dominican Republic has also incorporated issues related to inclusive development for all groups at the public policy level.

60. Ensuring the continuity of intangible cultural practices is an important feature of the Bhutan homestay development initiative, including with regard to creating authentic traditional lifestyles. It is also important in the Slovenian tourism sector, which promotes the uniqueness of its local heritage and local values, thus necessitating the involvement of local communities.

61. El Salvador has implemented the cross-cutting strategy "living villages", which promotes local development and provides opportunities for women, youth and indigenous peoples. In addition, through the Salvadoran Institute of Tourism, work is

being undertaken with regard to the accessibility of national recreational parks. Furthermore, the draft law on tourism presented to the Legislative Assembly is currently being discussed and includes a chapter on accessible tourism.

62. The Mexican Gender Equality Unit, created in 2014, has as one of its guiding principles the empowerment of women and the strengthening of institutional culture. As a result, In 2017, Mexico advanced work on strategic guidelines established in previous years and implemented new ones that have strengthened the practice of gender equality in public policies and processes and by actors and users in the tourism and travel sector in Mexico.

63. Through its "Impulsa" programme, the Guatemalan Tourism Institute promotes entrepreneurship opportunities for women in tourism. The Institute also coordinates with the private sector to support a project on creating economic opportunities, which is supported by international cooperation and fosters opportunities to generate employment for young women and men in various activities, including in the area of tourism.

64. Work is being undertaken in Panama on the "tourism for all" programme, in line with the Accessibility Law and the Secretariat of Persons with Disabilities. Under the programme, the Tourism Authority of Panama aims to enhance tourist destinations to avoid the migration of young people to the city and to foster training for site guides. Similarly, actions are being coordinated with the Maritime Authority of Panama and the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama to enhance the work of fishers and boat operators. Community tourism management is also being promoted.

65. The Dominican Republic is working to facilitate equal access to employment opportunities. People with visual impairments have been hired to work, for instance, in telephone stations. Similarly, the issue of accessibility to beaches has been included in the criteria for Blue Flag certification.

66. Special mention is made of women in the Trinidad and Tobago ecotourism and community-based tourism policies and of youth in the sport tourism and community-based tourism policy. Meanwhile, the Seychelles has created a scheme entitled "My first job", which facilitates entry into the labour market for young people, either through employment or by starting businesses. Turkey has carried out a number of European Union-funded and locally funded tourism projects to address and improve the participation of disadvantaged people in tourism development.

67. In 2017, the then Austrian Ministry for Science, Research and Economy published a study on the role of women in the Austrian economy. According to the study, tourism in comparison with other industries, has a high proportion of self-employed women (48:52). On World Tourism Day, 2017, the Austrian ministry responsible for tourism organized, in cooperation with the corresponding ministries of Germany and Switzerland, a conference on tourism destinations in order to discuss how to foster sustainable tourism development and the involvement of local communities.

68. Through the Sustainable Tourism — Eliminating Poverty Initiative, and with funding from a wide range of donors, UNWTO has built up a portfolio of some 120 projects benefiting 45 countries since 2004. More recently, in 2017, UNWTO successfully completed projects under the Initiative on vocational training in tourism, targeting youth and women in Mongolia, Mozambique, Timor-Leste and Zimbabwe, as well as projects to develop and promote community-based ecotourism in Cambodia and Timor-Leste.

E. Effective measurement of tourism impacts in support of evidence-based decision-making processes

69. Improving evidence in the tourism sector for better decision-making in the three dimensions of sustainable development and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals continues to drive the activities and initiatives implemented at the national, regional and local levels.

70. As part of the long-standing commitment of UNWTO to support the evidence-based management of tourism, the organization has continued to advance in this field. In order to advance data generation at the national level, UNWTO launched in 2016, with the support of the Statistics Division of the United Nations, the initiative entitled "Towards a statistical framework for measuring sustainable tourism". The initiative is aimed at developing an international statistical framework for measuring the role of tourism in sustainable development by linking the already existing Tourism Satellite Accounts with the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting. By linking the two economic and environmental frameworks more strategically, the initiative aims to provide a common language and organizing structure for exploiting the richness of data already available and for more effective data production, management and integration.

71. On the occasion of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017, the Government of the Philippines and UNWTO organized the sixth International Conference on Tourism Statistics, held in Manila from 21 to 24 June 2017, with the objectives of addressing how to measure sustainability and how to advance a statistical approach at the national level. In total, 1,500 participants from 88 countries participated, including ministers, chief statisticians, private sector representatives and key decision makers from international organizations.

72. In addition to its efforts to improve the measurement of tourism at the national level, UNWTO has also continued to work closely with stakeholders at the local level to improve evidence generation across the three pillars of sustainability. Because the environmental and sociocultural pillars of sustainability have long lagged behind in terms of monitoring efforts, the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories is continuing to support destinations in undertaking more holistic measurement approaches. It offers members a lively platform for sharing, discussing, improving upon and learning from experiences. Since 2016, the International Network has grown from 15 to 22 members, with three destinations currently finalizing their efforts to join the Network. Countries where observatories have been established include Brazil, China, Croatia, Greece, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal and the United States of America.

73. To foster the exchange of knowledge, UNWTO has established annual global meetings of the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories, where new, already established and interested destinations as well as other interested tourism stakeholders can exchange experiences, learn about best practices and advance their monitoring efforts. The changing content of the annual meetings is linked to the advances made within the field of tourism measurement, as the sector is currently experiencing a consolidation of measurement efforts at the local level, leading to more strategically aligned and integrated approaches.

74. At the first global meeting, held in 2016, destinations to the redesigned framework of the Network were introduced, while at the second meeting, in 2017, participants were given the opportunity to discuss specific qualitative and quantitative methods to monitor tourism impacts at the local level and to learn about the newest developments with regard to non-traditional data and the opportunities deriving from new technological advances. It also afforded interested and new destinations the

opportunity to be mentored by already advanced destinations. The third global meeting is planned for October 2018, focusing on the practical steps needed when establishing and maintaining the efforts of an observatory, including interactive, practical examples of specific measurement activities.

75. Building upon the experiences of the first years, observatories continue to be established, serving as instruments for improved evidence generation at the destination level. In order to foster knowledge transfer across the different levels, countries are increasingly establishing and connecting policy frameworks and guidelines at the national level with specific measurement efforts at the local level. Indonesia, Mexico and Portugal are examples of where the objectives of national tourism development plans have been linked directly to measurement activities at the local level, using the observatories as the key instrument at the local level. These developments indicate that the support for local efforts and, therefore, the responsibility of local stakeholders for overall nationwide developments are growing — a development that is visible not only within the tourism sector but in the global discussions related to urban development as well as climate change.

76. The success of the tourism sector has also required better management and planning techniques, influencing destination governance and fostering participatory approaches. With greater numbers of tourists travelling around the world, an increasing number of destinations are confronted with new challenges in how to effectively manage both growing tourism flows and subsequent environmental and social impacts. Better informed decision-making has therefore been placed at the centre of many tourism development-related discussions so as to ensure safe and healthy living environments and the improved well-being of the local population, while also developing attractive destinations for visitors.

77. In order to achieve a balance between the different necessities, there has been a shift in destination management at the destination level, changing from quantity-driven, mainly promotional activities to management efforts that emphasize reflecting more carefully on the local context and needs. In many destinations around the world this has translated into a reduction or even termination of active marketing efforts. In exchange, efforts are increasingly focused on, among other things, better understanding the types of travellers visiting the destinations and guiding traveller flows by measuring movement patterns in real time and predicting them accordingly; creating products and services that allow for a better spread of visitors in time and space; and improving the links between visitor profiles and tourism offers.

F. Further advances in the tourism sector relevant for sustainable development

78. A key enabler for the changing tourism management patterns at the local, national and regional levels is the digitalization of the tourism sector. New technological solutions and available data allow tourism stakeholders to better address and manage the impacts of the sector. While technology allows the sector to better adapt to travellers' needs and to plan and execute ongoing operations more effectively, it has also created opportunities to better predict development scenarios, changing the nature of tourism management overall. The collection, management and usage of data have become vital for businesses and destinations as a whole, giving them the power to improve competitiveness, implement inclusive governance structures and foster sustainability.

79. To lead and shape new tourism models for the twenty-first century that are based on innovation, technology, sustainability and accessibility, the first and second UNWTO World Conferences on Smart Destinations were held in 2017 and 2018,

respectively. Organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda of Spain and different partner destinations (the Region of Murcia in 2017 and the Principality of Asturias in 2018), the conferences gathered international tourism experts to discuss the opportunities and challenges for tourism destinations that are arising from innovative products and services based on new technological solutions. On both occasions, more than 500 participants gathered, including government representatives, private sector entities, researchers and academics and technology centres.

80. The World Conference on Smart Destinations has become an important platform for participants to share knowledge, build partnerships and advance their understanding about key topics related to smart destinations. Participants learned about and discussed topics including: geo-referenced data (location intelligence); the Internet of things and big data; the digital transformation within destinations; open data platforms and participatory approaches towards monitoring; smart destination governance; data-driven success stories; smart mobility; the new digital traveller; technology for improved accessibility of destinations; the circular economy; digital accessibility; using technology for the protection of cultural heritage and biodiversity; technology for monitoring visitor and community satisfaction; and digital innovation and new business models.

81. As a result of the growing amount of georeferenced data available, destinations are increasingly able to enhance reporting and decision-making mechanisms. Although many of the sources utilized are not new in terms of official statistics (such as satellite images), and although georeferenced data has been used for many years in various sectors, it is only through these new technological developments, (including new sources and greater, stronger and faster computing power) that geospatial data can be collected and used in new ways in all industries, including tourism.

82. New technologies and the growing capacity of destinations to monitor the effects of tourism in a more accurate and timely manner also allow tourism stakeholders to strengthen their transparent communication with all stakeholders. More open and transparent communication of tourism data is both a national- and local-level development, with one increasingly prominent method being the creation and publication of geographic information systems that provide a clear overview of specific tourism-related information.

83. To drive the digitalization of the tourism sector, a growing number of initiatives are being established to support new ideas and business models that have the potential to strengthen sustainable development. With the goal of creating jobs, generating opportunities and ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of the sector in the future, an increasing number of private and public entities have started to establish joint or individual accelerator programmes for tourism start-ups — a trend that is still in its early stages.

84. The above-mentioned trends have been observed as a result of actively engaging with businesses and destinations around the world and have been acknowledged and discussed in a variety of different publications and conferences. With the ongoing technological advances, this development is expected to continue, offering many different opportunities for the sustainable development of the sector.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

85. **Countries have continued to see sustainable tourism development as a strategic sector when addressing a variety of issues, including poverty alleviation; the protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage; actions with**

regard to climate change; economic diversification; and the enhancement of inclusive development for all population groups, and for which policies and legislation continue to be updated or newly introduced. In this context, the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017, represented an important milestone for tourism as it facilitated the mobilization of stakeholders and awareness-raising of the sector's contribution to sustainable development. The General Assembly may wish to consider inviting Governments:

(a) To continue to strengthen efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in general, and Goals 8, 12 and 14, in particular, and, in that regard foster examples of good practices and innovative solutions within the tourism sector;

(b) To introduce measures and support initiatives aimed at promoting the employment in tourism of disadvantaged groups, including the poor, women, young people, indigenous peoples, older employees and persons with disabilities;

(c) To apply whole-of-government approaches and enhanced policy and institutional coherence, supporting funding mechanisms and initiatives for poverty alleviation projects, including initiatives from community-based organizations and small private sector entities;

86. In the light of the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-being, in which the importance of tourism for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation is emphasized and in which tourism is recognized as an enabling agent of change, the General Assembly may wish:

(a) To invite Governments, international agencies and other relevant organizations to mainstream biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector and in climate change plans and strategies, intertwining economic, social and cultural elements with climate change adaptation approaches and the preservation of relevant ecosystem services;

(b) To maintain local supply chains and encourage and support small and medium-sized enterprises in emerging destinations and with various tourism business models to work to alleviate poverty, protect the environment and promote sustainable development and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) To ensure responsible resource management, addressing the negative impacts of overtourism and respect for environmental and sociocultural capacities;

(d) To improve and expand existing sustainable tourism observatories in destinations in order to enhance the measurement, monitoring and reporting of environmental footprints and the beneficial effects of tourism operations;

(e) To promote public awareness-raising, education and training on sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism and on the positive impact that sustainable consumer choices can have;

(f) To promote the content of the Cancun Declaration at all levels and in all sectors and mobilize the necessary resources to meet its requirements.

87. The close interlinkages between tourism and social, economic and environmental issues, and the sector's ability to act as an agent of change, oblige the tourism sector to adopt sustainable consumption and production practices

that help to accelerate the global shift towards sustainability. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish:

(a) To stress the need for the integration of sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism sector, including through identifying and adopting tourism planning approaches aimed at improving resource efficiency;

(b) To encourage the demand for alternative models, particularly circular business models based on renewable resources, longer and diverse product life cycles, shared consumption and interconnected value chains, in order to ensure sustainability not only in the tourism sector, but for the overall sustainable development of destinations;

(c) To encourage Governments, the tourism sector and relevant organizations to join the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the One Planet network, so as to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism sector, and as an implementation mechanism for Sustainable Development Goal 12, with potential to advance work on the other Goals of the 2030 the Agenda, the global blueprint for sustainable development;

(d) To encourage Governments and other stakeholders to make use of the "Tourism for SDGs — journey to 2030" platform, launched by UNWTO and Switzerland (on the sidelines of the Economic and Social Council high-level political forum on sustainable development) as a new tool aimed at advancing the contributions of tourism to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

88. Through the systematic application of monitoring, evaluation and information management techniques, policymakers, planners, tourism managers and other relevant stakeholders are able to strengthen institutional capacities to support the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies, strategies, plans and management processes.

89. Tourism, like other sectors, is currently experiencing a rapid digital transformation, offering new opportunities to improve sustainability based on timely evidence, making it even more relevant as a key element for the competitiveness of the sector — a trend that is expected to grow even stronger in the future. In this regard, the General Assembly may wish:

(a) To invite Governments and relevant stakeholders to welcome the many opportunities that the new digital transformation of the tourism sector offers and, therefore, to foster smart solutions that integrate knowledge from traditional and non-traditional data sources, supporting related capacity-building activities, ensuring long-term participation of local communities and the overall strengthening of a more holistic, evidence-driven approach to sustainable development in tourism;

(b) To welcome and provide support to tourism stakeholders at all levels in their efforts to acquire and utilize the expertise needed for the digital transformation of their businesses and destinations and to support efforts to enhance available data with georeferenced, spatial components (location intelligence) for more precise and timely information generation in tourism;

(c) To encourage Governments to consider the destination's specific sociocultural and environmental context and challenges when developing smart destination systems, objectives, strategies and action plans, prioritizing needs when implementing smart solutions;

(d) To urge countries and destinations to follow participatory approaches with all stakeholders, making responsible use of the possibilities that new

technological solutions offer, strengthening dialogue, transparency and ethics as key elements for sustainable and resilient destinations;

(e) To join relevant UNWTO initiatives such as the project on measuring sustainable tourism and the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories to support the worldwide practice of informed policymaking through the identification and dissemination of best practices and enhanced awareness of and capacity-building for sustainability among tourism stakeholders;

(f) To encourage Governments, international organizations and the tourism sector to continuously and proactively improve knowledge exchange and cooperation, supporting and fostering open data platforms for the sustainable development of the sector, in collaboration with other sectors;

(g) To encourage close cross-sector cooperation on smart solutions for destinations to ensure the scalability of solutions and their impacts as a means to meet the challenges laid down by the digital transformation.

(h) To invite the United Nations, specialized agencies and Governments to strengthen public-private partnerships, financing technology and innovation while investing in knowledge and human capital.

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Report of the Economic and Social Council

United Nations Population Award, 2018

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Secretary of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award. The report, which covers the Award for 2018, was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112.

* A/73/150.

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Please recycle

Report of the Secretary of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award on the United Nations Population Award 2018

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/201, entitled "Establishment of the United Nations Population Award". The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions, or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selects the laureates for the Award. The Committee is composed of representatives of 10 States Members of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years. The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund acts as Secretary of the Committee and submits to the General Assembly an annual report on the Award and its trust fund.

3. In its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the regulations governing the Award, so that an individual and an institution could share the award.

4. In its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

5. The current elected members of the Committee (until 31 December 2018) are Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, the Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Paraguay and Poland.

6. During its organizational meeting, held on 26 February 2018, the Committee re-elected Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee (Ghana) as Chair for 2018.

II. United Nations Population Award, 2018

7. The Committee received 18 nominations from qualified nominators for the 2018 Award, of which 11 were for the individual category and 7 for the institutional category. On 29 March 2018, in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Dr. Sir Prince Ramsey of Antigua and Barbuda in the individual category, and the Guttmacher Institute of the United States of America and Save a Child's Heart of Israel in the institutional category.

A. Individual category

8. The Committee selected Dr. Ramsey in recognition of his outstanding contribution to improving health care for thousands of people in the disadvantaged communities of his twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda.

9. As District Medical Officer, he not only treated thousands of citizens in disadvantaged communities but also served for three decades as a volunteer lecturer for student nurses and midwives at the Antigua Planned Parenthood Association, the Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation, the Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance.

10. Dr. Ramsey became a prominent champion of the HIV and AIDS cause, as an expert on the epidemic, as an advocate and as a pioneer in the fight against mother-

to-child transmission of HIV. Due to his life-saving work, the World Health Organization recognized Antigua and Barbuda as one of six Caribbean countries for the achievement of eliminating mother-to-child Transmission of HIV and syphilis in 2017.

B. Institutional category

11. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award, 2018, selected two laureates in the institutional category, namely, the Guttmacher Institute and Save a Child's Heart.

12. The Guttmacher Institute was selected for its achievements as a leading research and policy organization committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States and globally.

13. Within this field, the Institute has focused on issues as diverse as fertility, contraceptive use and services, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, pregnancy outcomes, abortion incidence and safety, as well as maternal and newborn health, HIV and AIDS and men's sexual and reproductive health. In all these areas, the Institute has played a pivotal role in filling a vital niche as a credible source of actionable, high-quality scientific research and as a centre of excellence in translating evidence into policy change.

14. Save a Child's Heart, an Israel-based humanitarian organization, was selected for its work as a world leader in providing life-saving cardiac surgery for children from developing countries, regardless of race, nationality or socioeconomic status. Established in 1995, Save a Child's Heart's goal is to improve the health and welfare of all children, in particular those born with congenital heart disease.

15. While providing life-saving heart surgeries and follow-up care, Save a Child's Heart simultaneously creates centres in developing countries, enabling local physicians trained by Save a Child's Heart to treat patients in their local communities. To date, Save a Child's Heart has saved the lives of 4,400 children from 55 developing countries in Africa, South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

III. Financial matters

16. As of 31 December 2017, the trust fund of the United Nations Population Award had a total balance of $1,739,958.32. Interest income in 2017 was $20,672.45. Expenditures in 2018, including prizes awarded to the three laureates, totalled $87,932.36.

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Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/245, the present annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children provides an overview of major initiatives and developments to sustain and scale up efforts to safeguard children's freedom from violence and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It highlights the strategic milestone that will be reached in 2019, the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, during which the high-level political forum on sustainable development will review progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, including its target to end all forms of violence against children, and the Assembly will mobilize accelerated action for the further implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

* A/73/100.

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I. Introduction

1. In the present report, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children reviews key global, regional and national developments and gives an overview of results achieved in safeguarding children's freedom from violence.

2. Guided by General Assembly resolution 62/141, which established her mandate, the Special Representative is a global, independent advocate for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children in all settings.

3. In its resolution 72/245, the General Assembly reaffirmed its support for the work of the Special Representative, recognizing the progress she has achieved and the consolidated partnerships she has promoted, and welcomed her efforts to mainstream the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children (see A/61/299) in international, regional and national agendas, including through regional and thematic consultations, field missions and studies addressing emerging concerns.

4. Realizing that every child's right to freedom from violence is a fundamental dimension of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations study on violence against children highlighted the pervasive extent of violence and its impact on children's lives and identified critical steps to ensure its prevention and elimination. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its ambitious vision of a world free from fear and from violence, including a distinct target (target 2 of Sustainable Development Goal 16) to end all forms of violence against children, provided new impetus to global efforts to reduce the risk of violence in children's lives and ensure the effective protection of victims.

5. Thanks to the mobilization created by that important process of consolidating commitments and actions, significant progress has been made with regard to the prevention of, and response to, violence against children. New international standards on protecting children from violence have been adopted, new partnerships and alliances have been formed, information campaigns have raised awareness of positive investment in prevention and the negative impact of violence on child development and global initiatives have been undertaken to tackle violence, including bullying, domestic violence, sexual violence, online violence and harmful practices. Significant regional initiatives support national efforts to strengthen the prevention and monitoring of and response to children's exposure to violence. Close to 100 countries have adopted comprehensive national policy agendas on violence against children, and many have enacted legislation to prohibit physical, psychological and sexual violence and to support child victims. Important steps have been taken to consolidate national data systems and research regarding the scale and nature of violence against children and effective prevention strategies and to improve the monitoring of progress towards its elimination.

6. Ending all forms of violence against children is crucial to safeguarding children's rights and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Failing to reach target 2 of Goal 16 would compromise millions of children, threatening potential gains across the entire 2030 Agenda with respect to education, health, gender equality, poverty eradication, social inclusion and justice for all.

7. Violence goes hand-in-hand with deprivation and cycles of vulnerability, leading to risks of poor health, poor school performance and long-term welfare dependency. In early childhood, the impact of violence is serious and often irreversible. As children grow, their exposure to violence becomes part of a continuum, at times persisting over generations. Moreover, violence is associated

with far-reaching costs, diverting billions of dollars from social spending, slowing economic development and eroding States' human and social capital.

8. Steady investment in children can prevent those high costs. Evidence shows that early childhood violence prevention programmes provide high investment returns, as highlighted below.

9. While half of those living in extreme poverty are children, and half of the world's children are affected by violence every year, budget allocations to address children's well-being are often inadequate. Unlike other dimensions of child well-being, spending to address violence against children is not systematically monitored and there is no international methodology for tracking and recording allocations, whether from official development assistance, domestic resources or other financial flows.

10. In an era of big data and real-time information, better tracking of spending is not only possible, it is necessary. The Special Representative remains committed to working with partners to strengthen the monitoring of spending on violence prevention.

11. Children's widespread exposure to violence is well documented in United Nations reports, academic research and in children's own heartbreaking stories. A recent United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report[1] presented data on violent discipline and exposure to abuse during early childhood, violence at school, violent deaths among adolescents and sexual violence in childhood and adolescence. It revealed alarming levels of violence affecting very young children, often within children's circles of trust, and renewed the call in the United Nations study on violence against children for every country to develop a national prevention and response strategy.

12. The international learning initiative Know Violence in Childhood published a global report for 2017 entitled "Ending violence in childhood" that reviewed critical research and data across regions. Its findings can help stimulate action to ensure that all children grow up free from violence and develop to their full potential.

13. To advance progress towards target 2 of Goal 16, the World Health Organization issued a handbook that supported the implementation of INSPIRE,[2] a set of evidence-based strategies to reduce violence against children. It provides detailed information and guidance regarding child-related sectors, including health, social welfare, education and criminal justice.

14. The Special Representative, in cooperation with United Nations partners, continued to support policy developments to accelerate progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The protection of children from bullying and cyberbullying gained special attention through three consultations that informed the development of the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General, which is to be presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session (see resolution 71/176).

15. The International Symposium on School Violence and Bullying: From Evidence to Action, hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Ewha Womans University and the Special Representative, brought together United Nations agencies, Governments, civil society, academia and young people. A multi-stakeholder platform

[1] UNICEF, *A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents* (New York, 2017). Available at www.unicef.org/publications/files/Violence_in_the_lives_of_children_and_adolescents.pdf.

[2] Available at www.who.int/iris/handle/10665/272996.

for data and research was launched to address the prevalence of bullying and school violence and to gather evidence on interventions.

16. In December 2017, China hosted the fourth World Internet Conference, which included a forum entitled "Safeguarding the future: online protection of underage users". Organized in cooperation with UNICEF and the Special Representative, the forum highlighted opportunities the Internet brings to children, the risks of exposure to online abuse, the importance of legislation to ensure children's protection and the role of the information and communications technology industry in placing the protection of children at the heart of technology and product innovation and in developing safeguarding standards.

17. A regional consultation on the protection of children against bullying and cyberbullying in the Americas, organized in April 2018 by the Government of Mexico in cooperation with the Special Representative and UNICEF, included participation by Governments, civil society and other stakeholders in Latin America and the Caribbean. In cooperation with children and adolescents, the regional consultation reviewed national policies, developments in legislation and data and expressed commitment to working towards a region free from all forms of violence against children.

18. In February 2018, Sweden hosted the first End Violence Solutions Summit, gathering children, Governments, United Nations organizations, representatives of civil society and religious, academic and private sector leaders to share and promote solutions to prevent and respond to violence. The Special Representative's keynote address recalled the significant progress made in children's protection and the imperative to advance with a deep sense of urgency.

19. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, participants reaffirmed their commitment to a child's right to freedom from violence at the centre of political agendas, and to place children, especially the most vulnerable, at the heart of the progress review of the 2030 Agenda to be held in 2019.

20. The Special Representative supported the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a global compact on refugees. Every minute, 20 people are forced to flee their homes because of violence, persecution or conflict. Children represent more than half the world's refugee population, with tens of thousands of girls and boys unaccompanied or separated from their families while on the move.

21. These children are as much running with violence as running from violence, including civil conflict and community violence, harassment by gangs, armed group recruitment and political instability. They embark on a perilous, uncertain journey, often at the mercy of unscrupulous smuggling and trafficking networks. Their daily travelling companions are fear, anxiety and the threat of violence. The children often fail to benefit from the protection to which they are entitled. At times they are separated from family members or placed in crowded facilities with unrelated adults where they are at risk of being harassed, abused and trafficked. For perpetrators of violence against children, impunity prevails.

22. Guided by the best interests of the child, the implementation of the global compacts provides a crucial opportunity to transform that vicious cycle of violence and exploitation into a virtuous cycle of protection for children on the move. To support that process, the Special Representative is developing a thematic report in collaboration with United Nations partners, Governments, civil society organizations and independent children's rights institutions.

23. Recognizing the critical role the private sector can play in advancing progress on the elimination of violence against children, the Special Representative and UNICEF issued a joint report entitled "The private sector and the prevention of violence against children in Latin America and the Caribbean",[1] during the first International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism, held in Bogotá in June 2018. The report presents positive private sector practices in the region to protect children from violence and to increase business investment in prevention strategies.

24. To protect children from exploitation in travel and tourism, the Summit called for stronger evidence to inform a global awareness campaign, enhanced online hotlines, child-sensitive approaches to assist and ensure the reintegration of victims and an end to impunity.

25. To share knowledge and mobilize expertise and financial resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Special Representative supports strategic partnerships, including the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, Alliance 8.7 (a global alliance with the goal of eradicating forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour), the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, the Task Force on Justice and the Global Youth Partnership for the Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Those are significant developments. But the urgent need to ensure the protection of children from violence has not diminished. Every five minutes a child dies because of violence. Every year, at least 1 billion children — half the world's children — suffer violence. They are intentionally targeted in politically driven processes, manipulated by organized crime, forced to flee armed and gang violence, sold and exploited for economic gain, groomed by abusers online, disciplined by violent means, sexually assaulted in the privacy of their homes, neglected in institutions, abused in detention centres, bullied in schools and stigmatized and tortured as a result of superstitious beliefs or harmful practices.

27. In some communities, children are abused as scapegoats for family or community misfortune and illness. They suffer stigma, abandonment, violent punishment and ritual killings if they are accused or perceived as witches or, in certain cases, if their parents have been accused of witchcraft.

28. Being branded a witch is a form of psychological violence, and the associated stigmatization and exclusion may lead to killing, mutilation or other serious forms of violence that are tantamount to torture. For highly vulnerable and socially excluded children, such as children with albinism or disabilities, orphans, children who were born prematurely or those simply deemed "different", the risk of violence is high.

29. Violent incidents are underreported and concealed because of fear and social pressure, including from traditional healers for whom witchcraft practices are a source of income. Police and justice systems may be ill-prepared or lack the resources to act, while children lack counselling, recovery and social reintegration services. This is a topic of high concern for the Special Representative, who continues to collaborate with partners to achieve the abandonment of those practices.

[1] Available at www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/private-sector-and-prevention-violence-against-children.

II. Supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and accelerating progress towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children

30. The Special Representative remains committed to seizing the unique opportunity presented by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to accelerate progress towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children.

31. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, many States Members of the United Nations have developed comprehensive sustainable development plans to guide national coordinated action to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. Promoting follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

32. The high-level political forum on sustainable development provides a strategic platform to ensure that children are placed at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. Through her participation in high-level intergovernmental meetings and cooperation with regional organizations and permanent missions, the Special Representative continues to advocate for the strategic use of voluntary national reviews and the high-level political forum by States and other stakeholders to share positive developments and lessons learned and to identify challenges and opportunities to accelerate progress in the protection of children from violence.

33. In 2018, 46 States submitted voluntary national reviews and several gave special attention to the protection of children, reaffirming their commitment to the prevention and elimination of violence and showing how children's rights and sustainable development are interlinked. The voluntary national reviews documented significant measures taken to advance progress towards target 2 of Sustainable Development Goal 16, including the adoption of national plans and policies, the enacting of legislation, the strengthening of institutions and partnerships, the training of professionals and the consolidation of data and research.

34. The theme of the high-level political forum in 2018 was "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". The ministerial declaration[4] expressed strong commitment to placing children at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. It recognized that developing the human capital required to build sustainable and resilient societies begins by investing in children, adolescents and youth to ensure they grow up free from all forms of violence. It emphasized the importance of ensuring meaningful participation by children, particularly the most vulnerable, as critical agents of change in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

35. The high-level political forum paid specific attention to Goal 11, providing an opportunity to promote national implementation of the New Urban Agenda (see resolution 71/256) and to support the leadership of local authorities in promoting city plans, guided by the best interests of the child and with children's active participation.

36. Half the world's population live in cities, and half of that population are children. Increasing urbanization, combined with high levels of economic inequality and endemic poverty, make the risk of urban violence particularly acute. As the Special Representative highlighted in her thematic study *Protecting Children Affected*

[4] See E/2018/L.20-E/HLPF/2018/L.2 for a draft version of the declaration.

by Armed Violence in the Community,[5] building schools and urban spaces that are safe for children, investing in public safety measures and ensuring access to justice can help mitigate the risks of violence faced by children in urban settings. Children must be at the centre of urban planning, and policies must be informed by children's views and experience.

37. That was also the key message of young delegates from Mexico and the Dominican Republic to the high-level political forum, who paraphrased Stacia Tauscher when they said: "Countries worry about what a child will become tomorrow; but they forget that the child is someone today." They also stated: "It is critical to invest in children's empowerment, and their ideas, experience and recommendations remain essential to reach the [Sustainable Development Goals] and to promote a safe, inclusive and committed society."

B. 2019: a strategic milestone to strengthen children's freedom from violence

38. The year 2019 marks a strategic milestone on the path towards ensuring children's freedom from violence, as it is the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified United Nations treaty, and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the theme of which is "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality", will be held that July. The forum will focus on four Sustainable Development Goals of special relevance to ending violence against children: Goal 4, on ensuring inclusive, safe and equitable quality education; Goal 8, on eliminating child labour; Goal 10, on reducing inequalities; and Goal 16, on building peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and its second target, on ending all forms of violence against children.

39. In addition, in September 2019, world leaders will gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York, during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, to review progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to mobilize accelerated action for its second implementation phase.

40. The convergence of those critical processes offers the international community an opportunity which must be seized: a unique chance to make a quantum leap in strengthening the protection of children from violence.

41. To inform that process and ensure that distinct attention is paid to progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals related to protection from violence, the Special Representative will actively engage in the reviews of the 2030 Agenda during the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly in 2019. In cooperation with a wide range of partners, a global thematic report on ending violence against children will be produced. The report will discuss the efforts of Governments and the initiatives of a wide range of stakeholders, including United Nations entities, regional organizations, civil society, professional associations, academia, religious leaders and children's ombudsmen, to mobilize support and influence progress.

42. The thematic report will take stock of progress made towards ending violence against children during the first four years of the 2030 Agenda, documenting lessons learned, acknowledging challenges and anticipating the strategic actions needed to realize its vision of a world free from fear and violence. A significant component of

[5] Available at https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/publications/2._protecting_children_affected_by_armed_violence_in_the_community.pdf.

the report will reflect the views, experiences and recommendations of young people, who are crucial agents of change in this process.

III. Mainstreaming children's protection from violence in national policy agendas

43. The Special Representative continued to support the consolidation of national efforts to address violence against children, including through country visits to Andorra, Barbados, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Portugal and Sweden.

44. The past year was marked by significant developments for children's protection from violence, as highlighted in the voluntary national reviews presented at the 2018 high-level political forum.

45. Albania [6] adopted significant policy and legislative measures to address children's exposure to violence, including physical and sexual abuse, bullying and increases in registered crimes against children. Those include: Children's Agenda 2020; the Law for the Protection of Children's Rights; and the Criminal Justice for Children Code.

46. Armenia [7] enacted a new law in 2018 to address high levels of domestic violence against children, including physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers. In addition, a Child Rights Unit was established in the office of the Human Rights Defender and an interagency multisectoral Council on Access to Justice for Children was established by the Ministry of Justice.

47. In Australia, [8] violence against women, domestic and family violence were addressed by the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022. The national "Stop it at the Start" primary prevention campaign targeting influencers of young people was launched to challenge attitudes supporting violence and generate long-term cultural change.

48. In Bhutan, [9] a study on violence against children conducted in 2016 shed light on the vulnerability of children to violence, exploitation and abuse, including children with disabilities, those from broken homes or living with extended families, and children from low economic backgrounds. The establishment of "law clubs" in schools and the promotion of legal knowledge under the "Know the Law to Protect Your Rights" series helped address those concerns and increase awareness of children's rights.

49. In 2017, Canada launched "It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence", a strategy based on preventing violence, providing support for survivors and promoting responsive legal and justice systems. The Criminal Code was amended to enhance children's protection from sexual exploitation and cyberbullying, and funding was allocated to enhance capacity to respond to public reporting and support the removal of online sexual abuse materials.

50. Ireland highlighted its ambitious vision for a country where the rights of all children and young people are respected and protected, their voices are heard and they

[6] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20257ALBANIA_VNR_2018_FINAL2.pdf.

[7] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19586Armenia_VNR_2018.pdf.

[8] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19592VNR_final_approved_version.pdf.

[9] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19369Bhutan_NSDGR_Bhutan_2018.pdf.

are supported to realize their potential now and in the future.[10] The National Policy Framework for Young People 2014–2020 addresses domestic violence, violence against women and girls and human trafficking.

51. Jamaica[11] revised its National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence to guide implementation up to 2023. The "Break the Silence" campaign implemented in 2015 to increase the reporting of child abuse by adults resulted in an 18.7 per cent increase in cases reported.

52. In Lebanon,[12] the 2014 law on domestic violence provides the framework to protect children, supported by criminal code amendments to strengthen the protection of girls and women from sexual violence and exploitation. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and UNICEF, developed a child protection policy which includes a comprehensive methodology for the early identification and referral of cases of school violence.

53. Lithuania has a National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims 2014–2020, and in 2017 guidelines for the implementation of violence prevention in schools came into force to promote a safe school environment free from violence and bullying.

54. The past year also saw significant progress in the development and implementation of comprehensive national plans and policies to protect children from violence.

55. Mexico and Paraguay launched comprehensive action plans developed through a participatory process, aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda. Mexico's national plan[13] identified critical priority actions: legislative reforms to address child marriage and prohibit all forms of violence against children; a national campaign on the prevention of violence against children; investment in online safety; enhanced mechanisms for counselling, complaints and reporting on incidents of violence; the strengthening of coordination; and an online survey to gather children's views and recommendations to inform implementation of the plan.[14]

56. The national plan of Paraguay[15] is overseen by the National Commission for Prevention and Response to Violence against Children. The plan uses the recommendations of children and adolescents, who play a critical role in its implementation, regarding raising public awareness of the various manifestations of violence and the mechanisms for reporting it, promoting information about the plan and supporting advocacy efforts in communities.

57. In 2018, Chile adopted a national policy on children and adolescents for 2015–2025.[16] The protection of children from violence is a key priority within families, schools and other settings. A law was passed establishing a "defender of children's rights"[17] in January 2018.

[10] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19382Ireland_Voluntary_National_Review_2018.pdf, p. 216.

[11] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19499JamaicaMain_VNR_Report.pdf, p. 95.

[12] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19624LebanonVNR2018.pdf.

[13] See www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/PLAN_ACCION_FINAL.pdf.

[14] See www.gob.mx/participa/opinna-dime-como-te-tratan.

[15] See www.snna.gov.py/archivos/documentos/Plan%20de%20Accion%20Pais_r1v7aq8u.pdf.

[16] See http://observatorioninez.consejoinfancia.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Plan-Accion_Ni%C3%B1ez.VF_.pdf.

[17] See https://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=1114173.

58. In December 2017, the Special Representative participated in the launch by Cambodia of the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children 2017–2021. The Plan was informed by findings from a household survey on violence against children conducted in 2014, and includes prevention and improved services for victims.

59. The Philippines Plan of Action to End Violence against Children was launched in 2018, and was informed by a national baseline study on violence against children conducted in 2016. The study documented the high incidence of home violence and the serious risk of children being exposed to online abuse. The Plan addresses the diverse dimensions of violence and stresses the need to strengthen the child protection system, ensure children's access to protective services and identify key roles and responsibilities within the Government for the Plan's implementation.

60. In 2018, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic launched a multisectoral plan of action to prevent violence against children on the basis of the findings of a national survey conducted in 2014. The survey was the first assessment of the extent and nature of violence against children in the country and helped identify the priority actions needed. As noted by the Special Representative at the launch of the plan, those developments provide a critical contribution to accelerated progress towards target 2 of Goal 16 and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

61. Spain is developing its third National Strategic Plan for Children and Adolescents (2018–2022) to address child vulnerability, including trafficking. Legislation is being finalized to protect children from all forms of violence, including very young children abused at home.[18]

62. Support for legislative measures on the protection of children from violence remained a high priority for the Special Representative, including in her missions to Andorra, Barbados, Cambodia, China and Japan.

63. Since 2006, the number of countries with a comprehensive legal ban on violence against children has more than tripled, reaching over 50 in 2017. Benin, Ireland, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lithuania, Mongolia, Montenegro, Paraguay, Peru, Slovenia and Viet Nam are the most recent countries to have enacted such a ban.

64. Sweden was the first country in the world to prohibit by law all forms of violence against children. In 2018, the Swedish Parliament adopted a bill to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into Swedish law to ensure that the best interests of the child were a guiding policymaking reference.

65. Peru adopted new legislation[19] in 2018 to support the implementation of its legal ban on corporal punishment. The new provisions require mandatory reporting by teachers and other professionals responsible for children, and recognize the crucial role played by municipalities in the prevention and elimination of violence, including through the provision of support to families and promoting positive parenting initiatives. In addition, new safeguards were foreseen to ensure the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all child rights-related public and private proceedings.[20]

[18] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/203295182018_VNR_Report_Spain_EN_ddghpbrgsp.pdf, p. 78.

[19] See Peru, decree No. 003-2018-MIMP (9 June 2018), *El Peruano, Índice de Normas Legales* (June 2018).

[20] See Peru, decree No. 002-2018-MIMP (1 June 2018), *El Peruano, Índice de Normas Legales* (June 2018).

66. In 2018, good practices and lessons learned on strengthening children's legal protection from all forms of violence, including corporal punishment, were highlighted at various high-level meetings. In April, the Government of Mexico hosted an inter-American consultation that reaffirmed the commitment of Governments from across Latin America and the Caribbean to work towards a region free from violence.

67. In May, the President of Malta hosted the High-Level Global Conference on the Universal Prohibition of Corporal Punishment. The declaration adopted by participating Governments, international and regional organizations, professional associations, civil society and academia reiterated the strong normative foundation for children's protection provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognized the opportunity provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to promote global efforts towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children.

IV. Reinforcing regional processes to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

68. Cooperation with regional organizations and institutions is a major component of the Special Representative's strategy to accelerate progress towards protecting children from violence. Regional organizations and institutions are strategic allies, and those strong partnerships have helped to place violence against children at the centre of the regional policy agenda, while at the same time enhancing the accountability of States and supporting their national implementation efforts.

69. The Special Representative has hosted high-level regional consultations in the South and Central American, Caribbean, South Asian, Pacific, European and Arab regions. Six regional monitoring reports have been issued and periodic review meetings were conducted to sustain and accelerate progress.

70. Significant regional political commitments and implementation road maps have been adopted (see A/HRC/19/64), and a new generation of regional plans on violence against children are being developed, aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They have strengthened national legislation and public policies, consolidated data and research and promoted awareness-raising campaigns.

71. To enhance that process, the Special Representative organizes an high-level cross-regional round table with regional organizations each year. The forum is a unique strategic mechanism within the United Nations system to enhance cross-regional and South-South cooperation, engage in policy dialogue, share knowledge and good practices, identify trends and pressing challenges and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

72. The eighth annual cross-regional round table took place in May 2018 in Thimphu, and was co-organized with the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children, in cooperation with the Government of Bhutan.

73. The round table gave special attention to accelerating progress towards the targets of the 2030 Agenda related to the prevention of violence, including on the protection of children from harmful practices and child marriage, and the role of religious leaders in tackling violence against children.[21]

[21] See https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/general/conclusions_recommendations_bhutan_2018.pdf.

74. Participating regional organizations recognized the strategic opportunities provided in 2019 by the upcoming review of Sustainable Development Goal 16 at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the first review of the progress of the 2030 Agenda at the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly and the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

75. To leverage those opportunities, participants in the round table committed to contributing to the global thematic report on ending violence against children referred to in paragraph 41 above.

76. In 2019, the Special Representative will co-host the ninth cross-regional round table with the African Child Policy Forum in Addis Ababa.

77. The Special Representative pursued engagement with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Special Rapporteur of the African Union on Ending Child Marriage and subregional organizations and institutions.

78. Much progress has been achieved in ending child marriage. The African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage promotes the rights of girls and has received commitments from its member States towards ending that practice. Twenty-four countries have joined the campaign, and the second African Girls' Summit on Ending Child Marriage in Africa, held in Ghana in August 2018, was a strategic opportunity to consolidate efforts.

79. In 2018, the Day of the African Child was devoted to the 2030 Agenda and the efforts made related to its theme: "Leave No Child Behind for Africa's Development". It highlighted the need for strong investment in essential services and in children's protection from violence to advance social and economic progress across Africa.

80. At the subregional level, in December 2017, Heads of State across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a strategic framework for strengthening national child protection systems to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and the exploitation of children, signalling a high-level commitment to end violence against children.

81. The ECOWAS strategic framework aims to reduce children's vulnerability, build their resilience and ensure their protection from violence, highlighting five priority areas: sexual, physical, and emotional violence; child marriage; children on the move; child labour; and civil registration, vital statistics and birth registration.

82. The East African Community met in Kigali in November 2017 to promote progress in combating violence against children through the development of a regional framework for strengthening national child protection systems and community mechanisms.

83. Surveys on violence against children continued to support government advocacy, policy, planning and budgeting as well as the enacting of legislation to protect children from violence.[22] Rwanda is the most recent example, publishing the results of its national survey on violence against children and youth in May 2018.[23]

84. The Special Representative continued to collaborate with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member States, the ASEAN secretariat and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children in the implementation of the 2015 ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the

[22] Eswatini, Malawi, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia completed national household surveys. Botswana, Uganda and Zimbabwe will launch their results in 2018, while Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia are developing similar processes.

[23] See http://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/Rwanda_VACYS_Summary_2018.05.17.pdf.

Elimination of Violence against Children. Aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the plan promotes national action towards the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals related to the prevention of violence.

85. During her annual dialogue in March 2018, the Special Representative urged representatives of the ASEAN Commission to seize the opportunity provided by the upcoming 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development to accelerate action towards protecting children from violence. She encouraged ASEAN to undertake a midterm review of the Regional Plan, building upon the significant baseline study conducted by UNICEF in collaboration with ASEAN member States and Commission representatives.

86. In South Asia, children's protection from violence was strengthened by the implementation of a regional plan of action for the prevention and elimination of child labour for 2016–2021 and the development of a regional strategy to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. Implementation of the regional action plan on child marriage for 2015-2018 was pursued through the development of national action plans in Afghanistan and Nepal and a national multimedia campaign in Bangladesh.

87. A platform for religious leaders to promote children's rights in the region was launched in September 2018 in Kathmandu with support from UNICEF. In Bhutan, a national strategy and a plan of action for the protection of children in monastic institutions was developed for 2017–2022.

88. The South Asia Parliamentarian Platform for Children convened in Dhaka in May 2018, bringing together legislators from across the region to promote and safeguard children's rights, including their protection from violence.

89. The Special Representative continued her cooperation with the Organization of American States. At its ninety-second session, held in Barbados, the Inter-American Children's Institute adopted a resolution on violence against children,[24] reaffirming commitments by member States to promote the prevention and elimination of violence in all settings, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also stressed the sharing of good practices and experiences, especially with regard to protecting children from sexual exploitation and the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and called for greater use of alternatives to depriving children of their liberty.

90. The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) developed guidelines for the promotion of positive discipline and the prevention of violence against children that are aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The guidelines will help advance regional commitments to implementation, including the enacting and enforcement of laws banning all forms of violence against children. The guidelines commit to developing a regional plan for 2018–2023 to promote positive discipline and violence prevention.

91. Cooperation with the Central American Integration System continued, and included high-level political dialogue between the Special Representative and the Secretary-General of the organization and technical experts. The Central American Integration System expressed its commitment to developing a regional policy on ending violence against children, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Central American road map on violence against children,[25] adopted in Santo Domingo in 2011.

[24] See https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/regions/enged_res_08_92-r17.pdf.

[25] See https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/political_declarations/americas/hoja_de_ruta_centroamericana_sobre_violencia_contra_los_ninos_central_american_roadmap_on_violence_against_children.pdf.

92. The Special Representative continued engagement with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children, including bilateral meetings with its Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission. The Commission promotes the strengthening of children's protection from violence, in accordance with international legal obligations, as a priority in its national development plans and national reviews within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The outcome document of the thematic debate of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the rights of the child, adopted in April 2018, called on States to enact legislation guaranteeing the protection of children from exploitation and for the establishment of specific national mechanisms to enforce the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and called for action to abolish harmful practices. It highlighted the need for States to exercise due diligence to prohibit, prevent and investigate acts of violence against children, eliminate impunity and provide assistance to victims.

93. The Special Representative strengthened her collaboration with the Council of Europe, including implementation of the Council's Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016–2021).

94. Children's freedom from violence is a key pillar of the Council of Europe's Strategy. To give the topic distinct attention, a group of experts was established to document good practices and consolidate progress in violence prevention and response. Results will feed into the Strategy's midterm evaluation, to be hosted in June 2019 by the Government of France.

95. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted new standards on violence-related topics in April 2018 on safeguarding the rights of children of imprisoned parents[26] and, in July 2018, on the rights of the child in the digital environment.[27] The latter promotes children's empowerment and protection through the development of legislation and policies, the strengthening of national and international cooperation and enhanced partnerships with key stakeholders. Additional work was pursued regarding the rights of the child in migration, with special emphasis on age assessment and guardianship of unaccompanied and separated children.

96. In November 2017, the Special Representative participated in the European Union Forum on the Rights of the Child, which that year was devoted to children deprived of liberty. The Forum brought together representatives from European Union member States and institutions, as well as representatives from Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, civil society, international organizations and academia, and children's ombudsmen. Young people affected by deprivation of liberty also participated. Expressing their support for the global study on children deprived of liberty, requested by the General Assembly in resolution 69/157, special emphasis was placed on detention alternatives and on the rights of children affected by immigration detention, deprivation of liberty in care or health institutions and children whose parents were in prison. The Special Representative presented findings from research undertaken by her office with Latin American partners on the experience of young people whose parents are in detention (see also sect. VI below).

[26] See https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=090000168073b175.

[27] See https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/sites/violenceagainstchildren.un.org/files/documents/political_declarations/recomendation_of_the_committee_of_ministers_of_the_council_of_europe_to_member_states_on_guidelines_to_respect_protect_and_fulfil_the_rights_of_the_child_in_the_digital_environment.pdf.

V. Violence prevention must start in early childhood

97. Children are often exposed to violence early in life, and during infancy violence has its most devastating and long-lasting impact on children's development, with consequences that last into adulthood.

98. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the crucial role of early childhood development in creating peaceful, prosperous societies: target 2 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 specifically commits States to ensuring that all children have access to inclusive, quality early childhood education and care so they may acquire the knowledge and skills to fulfil their potential and participate fully in society as productive citizens.

99. Investing in early childhood and ending violence in children's lives are first and foremost a question of children's rights. Evidence continues to mount, however, that it is also a highly cost-effective strategy that leads to better health, education and social outcomes that increase national wealth, while at the same time reducing the social expenditures required to deal with the long-term consequences of childhood violence.

100. The most recent report of the Special Representative[28] highlights that violence prevention must start in early childhood, when investment can achieve a high return.

101. A nurturing and caring environment helps to secure children's health, nutrition, early learning and sense of belonging, promoting their self-esteem and improving their ability to handle stress and adversity. Scientific evidence shows that the human brain develops faster during its first 1,000 days than at any other stage of life, and during that crucial developmental period the foundation for a person's future well-being is laid.

102. However, early childhood is still seen primarily as a period of transition towards adult life, and there is insufficient awareness of the negative impact that violence has on children's health and development, or of the social returns from investment in a violence-free early childhood.

103. According to the UNICEF report *A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents*,[29] close to 300 million children experience psychological aggression and/or physical punishment from their caregivers at home. In certain countries, shouting, yelling or screaming are common forms of discipline for children aged 1 year, and 176 million children under the age of 5 witness domestic violence.

104. Early childhood interventions may cost as little as $0.50 per child per year when combined with existing services. Yet lack of investment in early years may hold children back before they reach school age, resulting in a lifetime of disadvantage. A poor start in life can lead to a loss of roughly one fourth of an average adult income annually. In addition, countries may forfeit as much as twice their current gross domestic product in health and education expenditures.

105. The importance of a nurturing and caring environment for child development that includes good health, nutrition and stimulation is well established. Promoting positive attachments with caregivers helps children develop resilience, while early childhood interventions protect children against stress, laying the foundation for learning at home and at school.

106. Children subjected to violence, abuse and neglect in early childhood are more likely to later display a range of pathologies, including poor school performance, a

[28] See https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/news/violence-prevention-must-start-early-childhood.
[29] UNICEF, *A Familiar Face*.

greater probability of dropping out, anxiety, depression, ill health, risky behaviour and self-harm.

107. Longitudinal studies show that children exposed to maltreatment are more likely to be victims of violence later in life and to become perpetrators themselves. They are also at greater risk of engaging in criminal behaviour, while showing a tendency to minimize the seriousness of criminal acts.

108. Early childhood presents a unique window of opportunity to break the vicious cycle of violence. Evidence points to three key dimensions of successful national strategies.

109. First, protection of children in their early years begins with enacting a comprehensive legal ban on all forms of violence in all settings, including in the home, to send a clear message about practices that are unacceptable and non-negotiable and to help shape attitudes and behaviour. Today, more than 50 States have adopted explicit legal prohibitions on the use of violence as a form of discipline, correction or punishment, and many others are moving towards that goal.

110. Second, public policies are not neutral towards children. Investment in young children provides an important entry point to supporting families in their child-rearing responsibilities and protective roles, preventing child abandonment and placement in alternative care and supporting children at risk of violence. Parenting skills programmes coupled with social protection interventions help reduce the risk of social exclusion and deprivation, reduce family stress and address social norms condoning violent forms of child discipline.

111. Third, violence is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be addressed only through a multidisciplinary, multi-stakeholder approach. Effective cross-sectoral cooperation is needed, including with regard to health, nutrition, education and social and child protection, to address multiple risks faced by young children and their families.

112. Every child needs support in early childhood, but at-risk children from disadvantaged environments are least likely to receive it. Those children have truly been left behind. Disadvantaged families have fewer resources to invest in effective early childhood development. As a result, many at-risk children miss out on the growth and development that is the foundation for success in school, career and life.

113. Strong political leadership is vital to assuring the best start in life and the elimination of violence in early years. James Heckman, Nobel laureate in economics, states that "investing in early childhood education is a cost-effective strategy, even during a budget crisis" and leads to better education, health, social and economic outcomes that increase revenue and reduce the need for costly social spending. "The highest rate of return in early childhood development comes from investing as early as possible, from birth through age five, in disadvantaged [children and their] families."[30]

VI. Children as agents of change

114. Partnering with children is a crucial dimension of the Special Representative's mandate. Listening to children's voices and experiences is critical to realizing the vision of a world free from fear and violence set out by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the ministerial declaration of the 2018 high-level

[30] James J. Heckman, "Invest in early childhood development: reduce deficits, strengthen the economy", The Heckman Equation, 2012. Available at https://heckmanequation.org/assets/2013/07/F_HeckmanDeficitPieceCUSTOM-Generic_052714-3-1.pdf.

political forum on sustainable development noted, children are important agents of change and their meaningful participation is vital to the effective implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda.

115. The United Nations study on violence against children (see A/61/299) was the first United Nations report drafted in collaboration with children and young people, and their involvement remains key in violence prevention and response, including their participation in advocacy, expert discussions and research development.

116. Violence is a priority concern for children, according to more than 800,000 young participants in consultations informing the development of the 2030 Agenda, and that concern was reaffirmed by an online opinion poll of migrant and refugee children conducted by the Special Representative and UNICEF. Of the more than 170,000 young people surveyed, a large percentage saw violence as a serious phenomenon associated with children's cross-border movements. Violence was identified as a key reason for children deciding to leave their countries, a serious challenge faced during their journeys and an ongoing problem upon their arrival in destination countries.

117. Violence, fear and insecurity were also top concerns expressed by children affected by detention. Detention is highly relevant for the global study on children deprived of liberty, which was requested by the General Assembly in resolution 69/157. The Special Representative chairs the United Nations task force set up to provide system-wide support to the development of the global study.

118. As a contribution to the global study and to capture children's voices and experiences, the Special Representative, in cooperation with UNICEF and civil society partners in Latin America, undertook consultations and organized focus groups with adolescents who had been deprived of liberty and with children whose parents were in detention.

119. In both cases, children tend to come from families affected by poverty and social exclusion, have been exposed to domestic violence and have limited access to basic social services. Many children in detention also have an incarcerated parent, showing how the deprivation of liberty can become an aggravating factor that triggers cycles of vulnerability.

120. These children's lives are often marked by the lack of a nurturing family environment, the absence of social protection and the weak capacity of the education system to support them, which may lead to school absenteeism and dropping out of school.

121. For children with an incarcerated parent, life is characterized by marginalization, ostracism and feeling rejected, avoided and feared by other children and their families. They often face bullying in school and sometimes feel treated as a delinquent.

122. These children may need to travel long hours or days to spend a few minutes with an incarcerated parent, whom they meet in overcrowded, unfriendly places, under the scrutiny of a security guard, while enduring body searches and condescending looks.

123. Incarceration puts an additional economic burden on the household. Children may feel pressed to work to support the family, at times in dangerous places and doing dangerous activities, where they are at risk of additional harm.

124. Nonetheless, these children often stay hopeful and, especially when it comes to younger children, they remain resilient and optimistic about their futures. They also convey important recommendations for action. They appreciate being able to visit and maintain a bond with their detained parents, even if the act of entering prison is

traumatizing. They want better-quality and longer visiting times with more humane, dignified treatment. They call for safe spaces for dialogue with parents in detention and for safe, supportive environments where they can discuss this aspect of their lives.

125. Children also call for psychosocial and financial support for themselves and their families, and for a welcoming, protective education system. Moreover, they stress the need for measures to prevent and address violence whenever it is committed, including urgent changes to arrest and search procedures. The arrest of a family member can be a brutal experience and children strongly believe police should never be allowed to enter a home and assault their parents.

126. Violence and deprivation of liberty often go hand in hand. Adolescents in detention expressed deep concern about physical, mental and sexual violence. Violence is generally tolerated as a form of discipline, self-defence and survival, with children at risk of becoming indifferent to violence.

127. While most detained children are boys, a smaller percentage are girls. There are also lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children who suffer particularly severe forms of discrimination and exposure to sexual violence by peers and adults.

128. For many children surveyed, detention means a life of violence with multiple deprivations and little hope for a positive future. Poor conditions with overcrowded cells create a dehumanizing situation for children. Access to education, recreation and health may be restricted as a form of punishment. As a result, children suffer depression and emotional and mental health problems, and self-harm and suicide attempts are also reported.

129. The overwhelming desire of these young people is to live with their families and friends. Many, however, view the future with pessimism: society appears full of prejudice against them and is apparently unprepared to support their social inclusion and reintegration.

VII. Looking forward

130. The Convention on the Rights of the Child promises every child the right to a life free from fear and violence. The United Nations study on violence against children highlighted the pervasiveness of violence against children and identified key strategies for its prevention and elimination. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, new impetus was provided to national implementation efforts and international cooperation to prevent violence against children.

131. Guided by the human rights imperative of freeing children from violence, evidence gathered in recent years of strategies that work, the inspiring participation, efforts and resilience of children and the ambitious vision and historic opportunity offered by the 2030 Agenda, a quantum leap in the prevention of and response to violence against children is possible.

132. The Special Representative remains deeply committed to advancing progress with regard to the protection of children and to using strategic opportunities to mobilize increased political commitment and action towards building a world free from fear and from violence, with no child left behind.

133. The opportunities to accelerate progress towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children provided in 2019 by the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the review by the high-level political forum of target 2 of Sustainable Development Goal 16 will guide the work of the Special Representative, with particular emphasis on the following:

(a) Supporting national efforts to mainstream children's protection from violence into national policy agendas, furthering the enacting and enforcement of legislation banning all forms of violence, further consolidating data and research and, with regard to the voluntary national reviews to be presented at the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development, promoting the inclusion of assessments of progress in national efforts to protect children from violence, as well as the identification of gaps where further actions are needed;

(b) Supporting global, regional and national reviews of progress in protecting children from violence by preparing a global thematic report on ending violence against children, taking stock of positive developments and lessons learned since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and identifying persisting and emerging challenges and opportunities for positive change;

(c) Raising awareness of the impact of violence in early childhood and mobilizing greater efforts to enhance prevention and break the cycle of violence, poverty and exclusion in children's lives, including through social protection and quality services, to ensure that children are able to develop in a violence-free environment;

(d) Supporting the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a global compact on refugees to safeguard the rights of children at all times, including through a thematic report on the violence these children encounter and measures taken to ensure a continuum of protection in their lives;

(e) Consolidating evidence on prevention and response strategies, including research on a child's right to participate in recreation, play and sports, as well as efforts to combat the risk of violence. While sport creates a unique bond among children and enables them to enjoy and promote the values of respect for human dignity, inclusion and team building, it also exposes them to the risk of violence. Children may suffer bullying, emotional abuse and humiliation on the basis of their gender, body shape or performance, or be exposed to degrading initiation rituals or endure sexual abuse by their coaches. To perform better, children may be exposed to extreme nutrition and weight-loss regimes that lead to eating disorders and may be forced to use performance-enhancing substances. Some children are denied sufficient rest and care and are required to perform when injured. This is an area where little information is available and where efforts are needed, in collaboration with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, sports federations and children themselves, to ensure children's healthy development and prevent the risk of violence.

134. Through her global mandate, the Special Representative remains deeply committed to mobilizing action and engaging the support of people from all walks of life towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children and realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The world's children deserve nothing less!